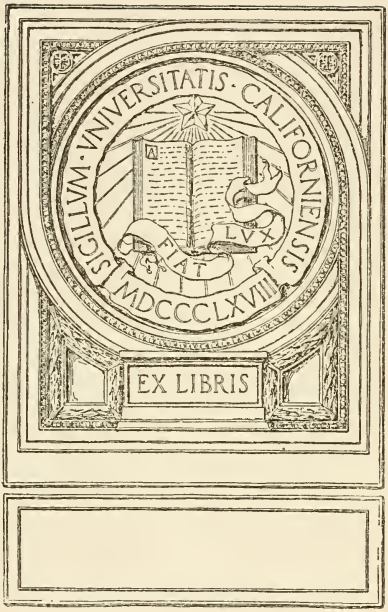
Unruly Daughters

A Romance of The House of Orléans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UNRULY DAUGHTERS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MADAME RÉCAMIER AND HER FRIENDS
MADAME DE POMPADOUR
MADAME DE MONTESPAN
MADAME DU BARRY
QUEENS OF THE FRENCH STAGE
LATER QUEENS OF THE FRENCH STAGE
FIVE FAIR SISTERS
QUEEN MARGOT
A PRINCESS OF INTRIGUE
THE WOMEN BONAPARTES
A ROSE OF SAVOY
THE FASCINATING DUC DE RICHELIEU
HENRI II.: HIS COURT AND TIMES
A PRINCESS OF ADVENTURE
THE LOVE-AFFAIRS OF THE CONDÉS

Photo by Braun, Clément & Cie. Paris.

Marie Louise Elisabeth d'Orléans,
Duchesse de Berry.

From the painting by Largillière.

Unruly Daughters

A Romance of the House of Orléans :: *By H. Noel Williams*

Author of "Five Fair Sisters," &c. :: :: ::

With 21 *full-page Illustrations, including a Frontispiece in Photogravure*

NEW YORK
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1913

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TO
MY WIFE

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UNRULY DAUGHTERS

CHAPTER I

The Duc de Chartres gets his ears boxed by his mother, in the presence of the whole Court—Explanation of the maternal indignation—Marriage of the Duc de Chartres and Mlle. de Blois, younger daughter of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan—Their children—Character of Philippe d'Orléans—His precocious gallantries—His treatment of his mistresses and his "*roués*"—His mother's opinion of him—Remarks of Voltaire—His portrait by Saint-Simon—The Duchesse d'Orléans—Her personal appearance—Her conversational powers—Her incredible indolence—Her "almost Satanic" pride—Her relations with her husband—Her affection for her elder brother, the Duc du Maine—Influence of her waiting-women over her—Despotism which she aspires to exercise over the members of her Household—Antipathy between her and *Madame*—Uncomplimentary references of that princess to her daughter-in-law—Deplorable manner in which the Duchesse d'Orléans neglects her duty towards her children.

ONE morning, in the winter of 1691–92, the courtiers of Louis XIV. were assembled in the Galerie des Glaces at Versailles, awaiting the rising of the Council and the King's Mass. That something of unusual interest was in the wind was evident, for they conversed together eagerly, in low tones, casting ever and anon covert glances in the direction of a rather pleasant-looking youth of seventeen or eighteen, who stood apart from the rest, speaking to no one, and manifestly very ill at ease. Presently, at the far end of the gallery

appeared a strange figure. It was that of a middle-aged lady, short and abnormally stout, with a crooked nose, fat cheeks deeply pitted by smallpox, a large mouth wrinkled at the corners, a square jaw, and a pair of keen blue eyes. She was attired in a gown which, when the world was younger, had doubtless been magnificent, but was now frayed and soiled ; she wore no jewels, and her hair was arranged in a style which would have distracted a *coiffeur*. Nevertheless, as she passed down the gallery, the courtiers bowed low before her, which showed that she must be a very exalted personage indeed.

As the stout matron approached the spot where the pleasant-looking youth was standing, the latter coloured with embarrassment and looked about him as though seeking some means of escape. Then, perceiving that all eyes were fixed upon him, with a great effort he contrived to compose his countenance, and, stepping forward, made a profound reverence and attempted to kiss the lady's hand. But what was his confusion and the amazement of the spectators, when the hand which he was about to salute was angrily snatched away, and he received from it so resounding a box on the ear that it could be heard from one end of the gallery to the other !

The stout lady was Elizabeth Charlotte, daughter of Charles Louis, Elector Palatine, and the second wife of Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIV. ; the youth whose ears she had just boxed was her only son, Philippe, Duc de Chartres, the future Regent of France ; and the offence which had earned him such treatment, in the presence of the whole Court, was that, on the previous evening, he had consented to wed Mlle. de Blois, the

younger of *le Grand Monarque's* two surviving daughters by Madame de Montespan.

Louis XIV. had always been keenly interested in the aggrandizement of his legitimated children. In January 1684, he married his daughter by Louise de la Vallière to Louis Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti; in the summer of the following year, he married his elder daughter by Madame de Montespan to the Duc de Bourbon—*Monsieur le Duc*, as he was now officially styled—grandson of the Great Condé; and he had for some time past determined to seek for her younger sister, Mlle. de Blois, a much more illustrious alliance and to bestow her hand upon his nephew, the Duc de Chartres, a "grandson of France."

For the disapproval with which such a match would be regarded by the public Louis cared very little; but he was aware that the opposition which his project would be certain to encounter from both *Monsieur* and *Madame* —to give the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans their official titles—would constitute a more serious obstacle. *Monsieur* was infinitely proud of his rank and exceedingly tenacious on all points which concerned it; while his outspoken German consort had never troubled to conceal her views regarding royal bastards and *mésalliances*. He was also a little apprehensive as to the attitude which the Duc de Chartres might assume, for if he failed to appreciate the honour of becoming the King's son-in-law, his parents might very well make his reluctance a pretext for declining the proposal.

To overcome these difficulties, his Majesty applied to his Grand Equerry, Louis de Lorraine, Comte d'Armagnac, brother of the Chevalier de Lorraine, the unworthy

favourite of *Monsieur*. The two brothers readily entered into the scheme, and undertook to answer for the consent of *Monsieur*, in consideration of their services being rewarded by their inclusion in the next promotion to the coveted Ordre du Saint-Esprit, to which the King somewhat reluctantly agreed. *Monsieur*, who was completely under the influence of the Chevalier de Lorraine, was soon won over; and, in order to make sure of the Duc de Chartres, the chevalier had recourse to the good offices of the young prince's tutor, the Abbé Dubois (afterwards the celebrated Minister), who owed much to his protection.

This astute personage had already succeeded in gaining a great ascendency over the mind of his pupil; nevertheless, when he broached the subject of the marriage to him, he was obliged to employ all his powers of persuasion to ward off a direct refusal. However, that was deemed sufficient for the success of the project, and as soon as Louis XIV. learned from Dubois that the ground was prepared, he resolved to hasten matters, and accordingly summoned the Duc de Chartres to his cabinet.

A day or two before, however, *Madame* had got wind of what was going on. She was beside herself with indignation, and, sending for her son, spoke to him in very forcible terms of the indignity of such a match, and drew from him a promise that he would never give his consent. "Thus," says Saint-Simon, "he was feeble towards his tutor, feeble towards his mother, and there was aversion on the one side and fear on the other, and great embarrassment on all sides."

On entering the King's cabinet, the Duc de Chartres found his Majesty alone with *Monsieur*. The King in-

formed the young prince that he was anxious to see him married, and that as, owing to the war, an alliance with a foreign princess was out of the question, while none of the Princesses of the Blood was of a suitable age, he had decided that he could not give him a better proof of his affection than by offering him the hand of his own daughter. He added that, however much he might desire the match personally, he had no wish to constrain him in the matter, but left him complete freedom of choice.

This discourse, pronounced with that almost terrifying majesty which Louis XIV. knew so well how to assume when occasion required, completely unnerved the unfortunate prince and temporarily deprived him of the power of speech. He thought to escape from his delicate position by throwing the responsibility upon *Monsieur* and *Madame*, and, when he had at last recovered his voice, stammered out that the King was master, but that a son's will depended upon that of his parents. "What you say is very proper," rejoined the King, "but, provided you consent to my proposal, your father and mother will offer no opposition. Is it not so, my brother?" he continued, turning to *Monsieur*.

Monsieur expressed his approval, as he had already done, upon which his Majesty observed that the only person who remained to be consulted was *Madame*, and sent for her forthwith.

When she appeared, the King acquainted her with the project, saying that he felt confident that she would offer no objection to an alliance which he desired so ardently, and to which both her husband and her son had given their consent. At the same time, he assured her, as he

had the young prince, that he had no wish to force it upon her. He spoke as though she could not fail to be overjoyed at the proposition, although he was well aware of the contrary.

Madame, who had reckoned confidently upon her son's refusal, was dumb with amazement and indignation. She cast two furious glances at *Monsieur* and the Duc de Chartres; said that, since they desired it, she had nothing to say; made a slight reverence, and returned to her apartments. The Duc de Chartres, anxious to explain how everything had happened, hastened after her; but the exasperated matron declined to listen to a word of what he wished to say, and drove him from the room with a torrent of tears and reproaches.

That evening there was an "Apartment."[1] Almost as soon as the concert with which these functions always began was over, the King, who had been working with several of the Ministers in turn at Madame de Maintenon's, sent for *Monseigneur*[2] and *Monsieur*, who had just sat down to lansquenet; for *Madame*, who was listlessly watching a game of hombre; for the Duc de Chartres, who, with a rueful countenance, was playing

[1] An "Apartment" was an assemblage of the whole Court in the grand salon, from seven o'clock in the evening until ten, at which hour the King supped; and after the royal supper in one of the salons at the chapel end of the Galerie des Glaces. It began with music, after which the card-tables were brought in. Etiquette was to a large extent laid aside on these occasions, and every one was free to amuse himself as he pleased. "Apartments" were held on three evenings a week during the winter; the other three nights being set apart for the theatre; while the Sunday was free. When these functions were first instituted, the King was frequently present, but lately he had ceased to attend.

[2] Louis de France, only son of Louis XIV. According to established custom, the eldest son of the Sovereign bore the title of Dauphin; but an innovation was made in this particular instance.

chess; and for Mlle. de Blois. That young lady, although she had received orders to make an unusually elaborate toilette, had not the faintest suspicion of what was in store for her, and, being very timid and terribly afraid of her royal father, imagined that she had been summoned to receive a reprimand. She arrived, in consequence, in so pitiful a state of trepidation that Madame de Maintenon took her upon her lap, in order to reassure her.

"The fact of these royal persons being sent for by the King," says Saint-Simon, "at once caused people to suspect that a marriage was in contemplation. In a few minutes they returned, and the news was made public. I arrived at that moment, and found everybody in clusters and profound astonishment depicted upon every face. *Madame* was promenading the gallery with Châteauthier—her favourite, and worthy of being so. She strode along, handkerchief in hand, weeping bitterly, talking pretty loudly, and looking like Ceres after the rape of her daughter Proserpina. *Monsieur*, who had returned to lansquenet, seemed overwhelmed with shame, and his son appeared in despair; while the bride-elect was extremely embarrassed and unhappy. Though very young, and inclined to be dazzled by such a marriage, she understood what was happening and feared the consequences."

At ten o'clock, Louis XIV. supped with the Royal Family, in the presence of his courtiers. He appeared perfectly at his ease, which certainly could not be said of the rest of the august company. *Madame's* eyes were still full of tears, which every now and again evaded her restraining handkerchief and overflowed on to the table. Upon the Duc de Chartres, who sat next her, with sus-

piciously red eyes, she did not condescend to bestow so much as a glance ; nor upon her husband ; and all three ate scarcely anything. It was remarked that the King treated her with the utmost graciousness, and offered her nearly all the dishes which were before him. She refused them brusquely ; nevertheless, he continued his courtly attentions. Upon leaving the table, his Majesty made his sister-in-law a very marked and very low reverence, " during which she executed so complete a pirouette that when the King raised his head, he found nothing but her back before him, removed about a step farther towards the door."[1]

Madame spent the night dissolved in tears, and these failing to relieve her outraged feelings, on the morrow she, as we have just seen, vented them upon her unfortunate son's ear, in the presence of the whole Court. After which act of retribution, she appears to have become a trifle more resigned to the humiliation which, she considered, was being inflicted upon her.

A few days later, the marriage-contract was signed in the King's cabinet, as was customary when members of the Royal Family or Princes of the Blood were wed; and on Shrove Monday, February 18, 1692, the marriage was celebrated, with great pomp, in the chapel at Versailles, the Cardinal de Bouillon officiating. At the conclusion of the ceremony, all the company dined in the grand salon, at a table of horse-shoe shape, the Princes and Princesses of the Blood being placed on the right and left of the King, according to their rank. In the afternoon, the exiled King and Queen of England arrived from Saint-Germain, with their little Court, and there

[1] Saint-Simon.

was a grand concert, followed by the inevitable lansquenet and hombre. After supper, the bridal pair were escorted to the apartments of the new Duchesse de Chartres. The bridegroom's night-shirt was handed to him by James II., who had at first refused, on the plea that he was so unhappily circumstanced that he might bring ill-fortune to the young prince; while Mary of Modena performed the same service for the bride. The benediction of the nuptial couch was pronounced by the Cardinal de Bouillon, but not until he had kept every one waiting a quarter of an hour. His Eminence's conduct, we are told, occasioned much unfavourable comment, since he had but recently returned from a long period of exile, which he had brought upon himself by his audacity in refusing the nuptial blessing to Mlle. de Nantes and the Duc de Bourbon unless he were admitted to the royal banquet on the day of the marriage.

Whatever were the disappointments of this union, which *Madame* declares, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, "had spoiled her whole life and destroyed her jovial temperament," unfruitfulness was certainly not among them, since between December, 1693, and June, 1716, the legitimated daughter of Louis XIV. bore her husband a son—Louis, Duc de Chartres, and afterwards Duc d'Orléans—and seven daughters, of whom all but the eldest lived to grow up. Here is the list:

(1) Mlle. de Valois, born December 17, 1693; died October 17, 1694.

(2) Marie Louise Élisabeth, called at first Mlle. de Chartres and, after the birth of her next sister, *Mademoiselle;* born August 20, 1695.

(3) Louise Adélaïde, Mlle. de Chartres, born August 13, 1698.

(4) Charlotte Aglaé, Mlle. de Valois, born October 22, 1700.

(5) Louise Élisabeth, Mlle. de Montpensier, born December 11, 1709.

(6) Philippine-Élisabeth, Mlle. de Beaujolais, born December 18, 1714.

(7) Louise Diane, Mlle. de Chartres, born June 28, 1716.

Before, however, relating the history of these princesses, which forms the subject of the present volume, we must say something concerning their parents, upon whom rests the chief responsibility for the vices or eccentricities which were to earn all but the two youngest so unenviable a celebrity.

Philippe d'Orléans, Duc de Chartres and, after the death of his father in 1701, Duc d'Orléans, the future Regent of France, was born at the Château of Saint-Cloud, on August 2, 1674. From his infancy he showed remarkable promise, but unhappily his good qualities were destined to be counterbalanced by the gravest faults. An ingenious story of *Madame* exactly depicts the character of her son. She said that all the fairies had been invited to be present at the young prince's birth; that all had come, and that each had endowed him with some talent or good quality. As ill-luck would have it, however, an old fairy had been forgotten, because it was believed that she had long since disappeared from this world. Irritated by the omission, she arrived at the moment when the last of her sisters had made her present, and avenged herself for the slight inflicted upon her by

bestowing on the child the unfortunate defect of rendering absolutely useless all the gifts he had just received.

Philippe d'Orléans, in fact, possessed of all the qualities required to form a great prince and to win the esteem and affection of the nation—brave, generous, amiable, kind-hearted, cultured, and intelligent—spoiled everything by his weakness and indecision of character, and by a debauchery which was regarded as singular even in an age which was remarkable for the laxity of its morals.

In this respect the Duc d'Orléans was not long in showing what he was one day to become. "He had," writes the historian of his amours, "one of those precocious temperaments of which

'La valeur n'attend le nombre des années,'[1]

and for tutor the unprincipled Abbé Dubois, who, in order to ingratiate himself with his pupil, seems deliberately to have flattered his passions."[2] With such instincts and such a preceptor, it is scarcely a matter for surprise that the young prince should have arrived at the age of love almost as soon as he arrived at the age of reason. A complaisant lady "undertook to aid Nature and to teach him all that he had not divined."[3] "At the age

[1] Lescure, *les Maîtresses du Régent.*

[2] If there were not already too many proofs of this, the evidence of the prince's mother would be in itself conclusive. "I at first thought well of the Abbé Dubois," writes *Madame*, under date November 8, 1719, "because I believed him to be sincerely attached to my son and that he sought in all things only his welfare and advantage; but when I found out that he was a perfidious dog, who sought merely his own interests, and, quite forgetting my son's honour, precipitated him into eternal damnation, by permitting him to plunge into debauchery, all my esteem for this little priest changed into contempt. . . . I have it, from my son himself, that, having one day, when quite alone, encountered his pupil at the moment when the latter was about to enter a house of ill-fame, he merely laughed with him, instead of taking him by the arm and bringing him home."

[3] Lescure.

of thirteen," says *Madame*, "my son was already a man; a lady of quality had instructed him."[1] The name of this *dame de qualité*, who had the distinction of heading the long list which contains those of women of every grade, has not been transmitted to posterity; but, whoever she may have been, her pupil profited so well by her instruction that before many months had elapsed his precocious gallantry was already a topic of conversation. We read in that scandalous chronicle, the *Mémoires de Maurepas:*

"His first mistress was the little Léonore, daughter of the concierge of the store-room at the Palais-Royal. At the age of fourteen, he had a child by her, which caused a great deal of talk. *Monsieur* was very much annoyed about it; *Madame* was not displeased, and even took great care of both mother and child. This girl was afterwards married to M. de Charency, son of a counsellor at Riom."

Dissolute as he was, Philippe d'Orléans was no corrupter of innocence, no destroyer of domestic felicity. Several of his mistresses, notably Charlotte Desmares and Mlle. Florence, were actresses, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and, indeed, until very much later times, a chaste daughter of Thespis was regarded as a kind of phenomenon. As to those of more exalted station, Madame d'Argenton, far from being deprived of a husband, received one almost from his hand; Madame de Parabère was the widow of a worthless creature, to whom it is doubtful if she had troubled to remain faithful; Madame de Sabran called her husband "her mastiff,"

[1] *Correspondance complète de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans,* Letter of June 15, 1719.

PHILIPPE II., DUC D'ORLÉANS, REGENT OF FRANCE

From an engraving by François Chéreau, after the painting by J. B. Santerre

and " he was only too happy to gnaw the bones of her lucrative infidelities " ;[1] Madame d'Averne sold herself, with the full approval of her consort, who took good care that the bargain should be a profitable one from his point of view ;[2] while Madame de Phalaris was married to a man who neglected and ill-treated her, and was probably as thankful to be rid of her as she was to be rid of him.

And, to his credit, it should be recorded here, that, when he became Regent, he kept his mistresses himself ; he did not make France keep them. As disinterested as he was prodigal, his accounts show that he did not even touch the salary attached to his exalted office. During the eight years that he exercised supreme power in the name of the little Louis XV., he had the opportunity of amassing a great fortune. He died in debt.

Nor did he permit his mistresses the least vestige of political influence. He declared that he detested women of gallantry who were at the same time women of affairs, and those who flattered themselves that they might transform a rendezvous into a sort of audience within the bed-curtains were speedily undeceived. Once, when importuned by questions on some matter of public importance by an indiscreet beauty, he caught up a mirror, held it towards her, and observed : " These are questions which ill become so beautiful a mouth." He did not, however, always choose to signify his displeasure in so gallant a fashion ; and that notorious *intrigante*, Madame de Tencin, found herself ignominiously dis-

[1] Lescure.

[2] On the beginning of the *liaison* between the Duc d'Orléans and Madame d'Averne, see the author's *The Fascinating Duc de Richelieu* (London, Methuen ; New York, Scribner, 1910).

carded for having presumed to offer him advice at a moment when he demanded only affection.

It was the same with his "*roués*"[1] as with his mistresses. They enjoyed much favour, but they possessed no influence. The duke would drink and jest and gamble with them, but he would not discuss politics. He would pardon them every sin in the Decalogue, but he would not pardon them ambition. The most favoured of them all, the Comte de Nocé, once ventured in public on a *bon-mot* against Dubois, then Prime Minister. He was promptly exiled.

The observations concerning the Duc d'Orléans which we find scattered throughout *Madame's* letters are extremely interesting and valuable, for, notwithstanding that she was warmly attached to them, no woman was ever less blind to the faults of her children. Here are a few:

"My son is not handsome; he has full cheeks; he is short and stout, and his face is very red; but it seems to me that he is not unattractive. When he dances or is on horseback, he looks very well, but, when he is walking, he does not appear to advantage."

"Between ourselves, my son is not a man *à la mode*, but a veritable fool where women are concerned. He reminds me of the old patriarchs. My son has much of King David about him; he has courage and intelligence; he is musical, short in stature, honest, and he passes the night willingly with all kinds of women. Provided that they are good-humoured, quite shameless,

[1] The term "*roué*" (one deserving to be broken on the wheel), was, we need hardly observe, invented by Philippe d'Orléans to describe his debauched companions.

and that they are able to consume plenty of food and drink, he cares little whether they are pretty or not."

" My son is eloquent, good-natured, and light-hearted."

" My son is eloquent, and, when he wishes, he speaks very impressively."

" My son is on very good terms with me ; he shows me much affection and would be in despair if he lost me. His visits rejoice my heart : he always tells me something amusing which makes me laugh. He is witty, and his conversation is very agreeable. I should be an unnatural mother if I did not love him from the bottom of my heart."[1]

Voltaire compares him to his great ancestor Henri of Navarre, of which resemblance the duke was always very vain. " Of all the descendants of Henri IV," he writes, " Philippe d'Orléans was the one who resembled him the most. He had his valour, his kindness, his indulgence, his gaiety, his facility of speech, his frankness, with a more cultured mind. His countenance, incomparably more gracious, was, however, that of Henri IV. Sometimes it pleased him to put on a ruff, and then he was Henri IV. beautified." [2]

Saint-Simon, who, it should be remembered, was on terms of the closest friendship with the duke, has devoted to him one of his most arresting portraits :

" The Duc d'Orléans," he writes, " was, at the most, of mediocre stature, full-bodied, without being stout ; his manner and bearing were very easy and very noble ; his face was full and very agreeable ; his hair was black, and he wore a black wig. Although he danced very

[1] *Correspondance complète, passim.*
[2] *Siècle de Louis XV.* Cf. Saint-Simon, p. 16, *infra.*

badly, and had succeeded but ill at the riding-school,[1] he had in his countenance, in his gestures, and in all his movements, infinite grace, and so natural that it adorned even his most ordinary and commonplace actions. With much ease, when nothing constrained him, he was gentle, affable, frank, of easy and charming access. The tone of his voice was agreeable, and he spoke with astonishing fluency on all kinds of subjects. His eloquence was natural and extended to the most ordinary and everyday discourse; while it equally entered into his observations upon the most abstract sciences, upon which he talked most informingly; upon the affairs of government, finance, politics, justice, war, the Court, general conversation, the arts and mechanics. . . . With all this, he had no presumption, no trace of superiority, natural or acquired. He reasoned with you as with an equal, and astonished even the most able men. Although he never forgot his position, or allowed others to forget it, he carried no constraint with him, but put everybody at his ease, and placed himself upon the level of others.

" He had the weakness to believe that he resembled Henri IV. in everything, and strove to affect the manners, the gestures, and the bearing of that monarch. Like Henri IV., he was naturally kind, humane, compassionate; and, indeed, this man, who has been so cruelly accused of the blackest and most inhuman crimes, was more opposed to the destruction of others than any man I have ever known, and had such a singular dislike to causing any one pain that it may be said his gentleness, his humanity, his easiness, had become faults; and I do not hesitate to

[1] This, singularly enough, is the exact opposite of what *Madame* says.

affirm that the supreme virtue which teaches us to pardon our enemies he converted into a vice, by the indiscriminate freedom with which he applied it.

" Of ambition for reigning or governing he had none. If he made a false move in Spain,[1] it was because he had been misdirected. What he would have liked best, would have been to command armies while war lasted, and divert himself the rest of the time without constraint to himself or others. He was, in fact, very suited for this, for with much valour he combined foresight, judgment, coolness, and great capacity."

Saint-Simon then proceeds to show us the other side of the picture, which, notwithstanding its lurid colouring, is probably a faithful enough representation.

He attributes all the faults and vices of his royal friend to the " execrable poison " administered to him in his youth by that " wizened, herring-gutted, weazel-faced scamp " Dubois, at whose head he hurls almost every opprobious epithet in his rich vocabulary. " Dubois," he says, " led him into debauchery, made him despise all duty and all decency, and persuaded him that he had too much intelligence to be the dupe of religion, which, he said, was a politic invention to frighten ordinary intellects, and to keep the people in subjection. He imbued him, too, with his favourite principle, that

[1] At the conclusion of the campaign of 1708 in Spain, during which he had taken Alicante and Tortosa, the Duc d'Orléans was recalled to France, under the suspicion, which appears justified, that he had made overtures to the English generals, with the view of ascertaining whether their Government would favour the substitution of himself for the feeble Philip V. The rumour ran that he was to be brought to trial, but Louis XIV. did not wish to transform a troublesome intrigue into a State crime, and took care to deny it. Nevertheless, during the remainder of the old King's life the Duc d'Orléans remained in a kind of semi-disgrace.

probity in man and virtue in woman are mere chimeras, without existence in anybody save a few poor slaves of early training. This was the basis of the worthy ecclesiastic's doctrines, whence arose the licence of falsehood, deceit, artifice, infidelity, perfidy; in a word, every villainy and every crime were transformed into policy, capacity, greatness, liberty, and depth of intellect, enlightenment, good conduct, provided it could be hidden, and if suspicion could be avoided."

The chronicler goes on to tell us that the prince grew so accustomed to riotous living that he was unable to do without it, and " could only divert himself by dint of noise, tumult, and excess. It is this which led him into such strange and such scandalous debauches, and, since he wished to surpass all his companions, to mingle with his parties of pleasure the most impious discourses, and, as a precious refinement, to hold the most outrageous orgies on the most holy days, as he did several times during his regency, on Good Friday, by choice, and on other similar days. The more debauched a man was the more he esteemed him ; and I have over and over again known him to express the most intense admiration for the Grand Prior,[1] because for forty years he had always gone to bed drunk, and had never ceased to keep mistresses in the most public manner, and to hold the most impious and irreligious discourses. With these principles, and the conduct which was the outcome of them, it is not surprising that the Duc d'Orléans was deceitful to such an extent that he boasted of it, and plumed himself upon

[1] Philippe de Vendôme, Grand Prior of France (1655–1727). He was the younger brother of Louis, Duc de Vendôme, the celebrated general.

being the most skilful deceiver in the world. . . . So many were the engagements which he broke that no value was attached even to the most positive. He was no longer believed, even when he spoke in all good faith. To conclude, the obscure, and for the most part blackguard, company which he ordinarily affected in his debauches, and which he did not scruple publicly to call his '*roués*,' drove away all decent people, and did him an infinitude of harm."

The Duc d'Orléans might have been a better man if he had had a different kind of wife, but unhappily it was his misfortune to be married to a woman so entirely selfish that she was incapable of exercising the least influence for good over either her husband or her children.

Françoise Marie de Bourbon, Duchesse d'Orléans, was the youngest of the four daughters whom Madame de Montespan had presented to Louis XIV., and therefore sister to the Duchesse de Bourbon (*Madame la Duchesse*), the Duc du Maine, and the Comte de Toulouse, and half-sister to the widowed Princesse de Conti. She was born on May 25, 1677, and was the first-fruits of the reconciliation between her mother and the King which had followed the brief rupture effected by the eloquent remonstrances of Bossuet, which caused Madame de Caylus to write, with obvious malice: "It seems to me that one can still detect in the character, the physiognomy, and the whole person of the Duchesse d'Orléans traces of this combat between love and religion."[1]

In appearance, the duchess was "tall and in every

[1] *Souvenirs et Correspondance de Madame de Caylus.* For a full account of this episode, see the author's *Madame de Montespan* (London, Harper; New York, Scribner, 1903).

way majestic; her complexion, her throat, her arms, were admirable; she had a tolerable mouth, with beautiful teeth, somewhat long; and cheeks too broad and too pendant, which interfered with, but did not spoil her beauty. What disfigured her the most were her eyebrows, which were, so to speak, peeled and red, with very little hair; she had, however, fine eyelashes, with well-set, chestnut-coloured hair. Without being humpbacked or deformed, she had one side larger than the other, which caused her to walk awry; and this defect in her figure indicated another, which was more troublesome in society and which inconvenienced herself."[1]

Though not so gifted as her elder sister, *Madame la Duchesse*, her abilities were, nevertheless, considerable, and she shone greatly in conversation, "having a justness of expression, and a fluency and singularity in the choice of language, which always astonished one, together with that manner peculiar to Madame de Montespan and her sisters, which was transmitted to none save those intimate with her or those whom she had brought up."[2] She laboured under the disadvantage of an embarrassed and indistinct utterance, so that it was not altogether easy for unaccustomed ears to follow what she said, but very soon people became used to this and were charmed by her clever and witty talk.

The duchess, however, was far too indolent to employ her intelligence except in conversation; indeed, she appears to have been one of the most indolent women of her time. "One has never heard of such laziness," writes her disgusted mother-in-law. "She has had a couch made on which she reclines when she plays lansquenet;

[1] Saint-Simon. [2] *Ibid.*

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Françoise Marie de Bourbon (Mlle. de Blois), Duchesse d'Orléans

From the painting by Largilliere, at Versailles

(Photo by W. A. Mansell & Co.)

we make game of her, but that has no effect. She gambles lying down ; she takes her meals lying down ; she reads lying down ; in a word, almost all her life is passed lying down. This must be bad for her health ; indeed, she is almost always ailing. One day, she complains of her head ; another day, of her digestion. It would seem that, leading such a life, she could not have robust children ; nevertheless, her three elder daughters are strong and in very good health."[1]

The one thing capable of surmounting this extraordinary indolence—which grew upon her steadily and prevented her from performing a mother's duty towards her numerous family—and of stimulating her to some degree of energy and activity, was her pride. This, we are told, was " almost Satanic." As the daughter of Louis XIV., she considered herself superior to all the princesses, and could never bring herself to admit the inferiority which her illegitimate birth inflicted upon her ; indeed, she was of opinion that she had much honoured the Duc d'Orléans in marrying him ! Duclos says that people jocosely compared her to Minerva, who, recognising no mother, prided herself on being the daughter of Jupiter.[2]

Although she had no love for the husband whom Louis XIV. had chosen for her, her vanity was wounded by his conduct, since " she would have liked to have been loved and served by him as a goddess." She did not, however, make the slightest effort to gain his affection, pretending that, being so much above him, to do so would be to degrade herself ; nor was she even willing to renounce

[1] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of April 17, 1718.

[2] *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'Histoire de Louis XIV.*, etc. The letters of legitimation of the children of Madame de Montespan did not mention the name of the mother.

what she knew was displeasing to him.[1] This was the more unfortunate, since the Duc d'Orléans was fond of his wife, as, *Madame* tells us, he was of all women with whom he was on terms of intimacy. But she was always so cold and ungracious towards him, and gave herself such absurd airs of superiority, that he soon ceased to spend much of his time in her company, and "plumed himself," says Saint-Simon, "on carrying his licentious conduct to the farthest limits, in order to show the contempt which he felt for his consort." This, however, would appear to have been during the earlier part of their married life, for in later years this singular couple, coming to understand one another better, lived on tolerably good terms; the duchess permitted her husband to go his own way without remonstrance, and the duke, in return, endeavoured to respect outward appearances as much as possible. "Monsieur," said he on one occasion to the Prince de Conti, who had conducted himself after an evening of revelry with too little dignity, "I recollect reading, by chance, in some book that, when a man is drunk, he ought to go to bed without saying anything to his wife. As for myself, when I am in that condition, which happens pretty frequently, I take good care not to tell the Duchesse d'Orléans, nor to let her find it out. I do it on the sly."

Too indolent to perform the most ordinary duties of a mother towards her children, or to occupy herself with the interests of her husband, to whose dissipated life she

[1] With all her haughtiness, however, she was timidity itself in the presence of her royal father, and also of Madame de Maintenon, who had brought her up. "The King," writes Saint-Simon, "could make her swoon by a single severe look, and Madame de Maintenon, too, perhaps; at all events, she trembled before her, and in public she never replied to them without stammering and looking frightened. I say, replied, since to address the King first was beyond her strength."

appeared to be profoundly indifferent, the duchess, as we shall presently see, was capable of plenty of energy if her pride was touched, or if any question arose which concerned her elder brother, the Duc du Maine, to whom she was devotedly attached. For this prince she cheerfully endured every kind of trouble and fatigue, and, in the campaign against the legitimated princes at the beginning of the Regency, she espoused his cause with the most passionate enthusiasm. This devotion, however, was not perhaps wholly disinterested, for, if the Duc du Maine had become all-powerful, she would undoubtedly have enjoyed far more influence than her husband ever permitted her. The duchess was also attached, though in a much less degree, to her younger brother, the Comte de Toulouse; but there was little love lost between her and her sister and half-sister, *Madame la Duchesse* and the widowed Princesse de Conti; indeed, during the lifetime of Louis XIV., their quarrels were so frequent that the King was obliged to threaten them with banishment from Court, if they could not contrive to compose their differences.

It was her fancy to surround herself with a Court, where a sort of cult appears to have been professed for her. She preferred to bestow her favour upon humble and servile persons, rather than upon those who showed any independence of character, and her waiting-women, who were ready to flatter her to the top of her bent, had great influence over her. "She prefers the company of waiting-women to those of persons of consideration," writes *Madame*. "Sometimes a whole week passes without her seeing any of her ladies-in-waiting, who dare not present themselves before her, unless they are sent for."[1]

[1] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of March 31, 1719.

However, she had sufficient good sense to select as her most intimate friend and confidante, her cousin, the Duchesse Sforza,[1] an excellent woman, intelligent, prudent and virtuous, whose counsels served to counteract to some degree the influence of certain dangerous intriguers, such as the Duc and Duchesse de Saint-Pierre, who, by extravagant professions of devotion, had succeeded in wheedling their way into important posts in the princess's Household.

This establishment was on quite an imposing footing, and the Duchesse d'Orléans aspired to exercise a veritable despotism over its members, and even to regulate their domestic affairs. Saint-Simon relates an instance of this. She had for her *dame d'atours* the Comtesse de Castries, daughter of the Duc de Vivonne, brother of Madame de Montespan and, therefore, like the Duchesse Sforza, her cousin-germaine; and for *chevalier d'honneur* that lady's husband. Now, in the case of the Duchesse Sforza, the wife of a member of a princely Italian House, her Royal Highness had condescended to acknowledge the relationship; but the Castries, being comparatively humble people, she thought fit to ignore it, nor did they, although on terms of some familiarity with their mistress, ever venture to remind her of it. In course of time it happened that M. and Madame de Castries, who possessed but a moderate fortune, arranged what they considered to be a very satisfactory marriage for their

[1] She was the younger daughter of Madame de Montespan's elder sister, the Duchesse de Thianges, and sister of the beautiful Duchesse de Nevers, upon whom Louis XIV. had for a brief moment cast a rather more than friendly eye. Madame de Caylus describes her as "having a white skin, rather fine eyes, and a nose pendant over a very red mouth, which made M. de Vendôme say that she resembled a paroquet eating a cherry."

only son, the lady being a certain Mlle. Nolent, daughter of a wealthy councillor of the Parlement of Paris; but, before definitely concluding the affair, they judged it advisable, as members of her Household, to go through the form of consulting the Duchesse d'Orléans. To their profound astonishment, on learning of the proposed marriage, the duchess all of a sudden recollected that Madame de Castries was her cousin, and declared that an alliance between her son and the daughter of a bourgeois family was entirely out of the question. It was not that she had another marriage to propose for the young man, still less a more advantageous one; but she made so great a pother that the Castries, fearful of offending her, dared not proceed with the affair. The marriage was not abandoned, however, since it was greatly desired by all the parties concerned; and at the end of six months the Duchesse d'Orléans's brothers, the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse, good-naturedly intervened and obtained the raising of the interdict; and it was duly concluded. The haughty princess, however, could never be persuaded to treat the young Madame de Castries otherwise than with the coldest disdain, and the poor girl scarcely dared to present herself before her; while the tardily-acknowledged cousin and the Comte de Castries remained in a sort of semi-disgrace, until death removed both the innocent cause of offence and her husband within a few days of one another.

Like her husband, the Duchesse d'Orléans was exceedingly deceitful, but, whereas the duke practised dissimulation as a matter of policy, his wife was naturally false. Thus, she affected great respect and even affection for her mother-in-law, and overwhelmed her with compli-

ments and attentions whenever she saw her, although she disliked the old princess heartily, and in secret never lost an opportunity of doing her an ill-turn. *Madame*, who was far too shrewd a judge of character to be deceived by such professions, returned the hostile sentiments which she knew the duchess entertained for her with interest; indeed, the latter appears to have inspired her with a veritable antipathy, and her correspondence abounds in caustic comments upon her daughter-in-law's character and mode of life. Her statements, however, must be accepted with considerable reserve, for, when *Madame* was writing about persons who had been so unfortunate as to incur her displeasure, she was inclined to allow her pen to run away with her.

"My daughter-in-law is a disagreeable and worthless creature," she writes, under date October 10, 1693. "She does not trouble about my son, and despises *Monseigneur*. . . . She does not occupy herself with anything, but passes her life, in my opinion, in a frightful indifference. . . . Her arrogance and ill-humour are insupportable, and her countenance is extremely displeasing. She is quite crooked, and has a horrible pronunciation, as though her mouth were always full of pap, and a head which wags unceasingly. Such is the present which *la vieille ordure* [Madame de Maintenon] has given us. You can imagine if one ought to lead an agreeable life with her. But birth takes the place of everything and supplies the qualities which are lacking. She torments her husband greatly, and the poor lad repents bitterly of having committed this folly and of having refused to believe me."

When, however, a few years later, the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans had decided to make the best of their bar-

gain, and had, in consequence, begun to live on tolerably amicable terms, *Madame* was still more displeased; and there can be very little doubt that the old lady infinitely preferred to see the Palais-Royal *ménage* at variance than comparatively united, and that she employed her influence with her son to indispose him against his wife. "My son," she writes, "has, where his wife is concerned, a blindness which seems incredible, when one knows how little she troubles about him. He is intelligent and yet he does not see what is going on. Provided that she does not object to his going constantly to Paris, and leading a disorderly life there, he is satisfied with her."[1]

Not content with accusing her detested daughter-in-law of indolence, vanity, ill-temper, arrogance, deceit, and gluttony, and with "getting as drunk as a currier three times a week," *Madame* charges her with unfaithfulness to her husband: "Despite all her gravity, she is never without affairs. One ought, however, to render her this justice, that she conducts herself very well in this respect, and will never give cause for scandal. All Paris believes her a vestal; but I, who see things from close at hand, I know well what is going on. I counsel my son always to live on very good terms with her; for what purpose would a rupture serve? The King would take his daughter's part, and, notwithstanding the scandal, my son would be obliged to keep her. It is therefore better to close the eyes and to live amicably together."[2]

This last charge against the Duchesse d'Orléans lacks confirmation, and we ought to hesitate to accept the testimony of a writer who was only too ready to believe

[1] *Lettres inédites de la Princesse Palatine*, publiées par M. A. Rolland, Letter of April 19, 1701.

[2] *Ibid.* Letter of May 21, 1712.

anything to the detriment of those whom she disliked. But *Madame* is on much surer ground when she reproaches her daughter-in-law with the most deplorable indifference to her maternal duties. "The mother brings up her children in a fashion which is an object of derision and of scandal," she writes. "It is necessary for me to assist at that daily, and all that I can say is perfectly useless." The Duchesse d'Orléans, in fact, had little affection for her offspring, and had not the smallest intention of abandoning her indolent and selfish habits in order to superintend their education. She infinitely preferred to spend her days gracefully reclining on her luxurious couch in a becoming *peignoir*, listening to the tittle-tattle of her waiting-women, reading or—since that generally entailed too much exertion—having read to her, fashionable romances, or playing cards with the Duchesse Sforza, to having her children around her, interesting herself in their studies and amusements, hearing the reports of tutors and *gouvernantes*, and deciding with them the measures to be adopted. Occupations of this kind might be all very well for ordinary mothers, but were really too fatiguing for great princesses, particularly when they happened to be, like herself, in delicate health; and, if she had been allowed to have her way, she would have made nuns of all her daughters. "It would seem," writes Édouard de Barthélemy, "as though she considered that she had taken sufficient trouble in bringing her daughters into the world, and that they had no further claim upon her."[1]

Such were the parents of the bevy of princesses whose history we shall now relate.

[1] Édouard de Barthélemy, *les Filles du Régent*.

CHAPTER II

The Orléans princesses—Their neglected childhood—Serious illness of *Mademoiselle*, whose life is saved by her father's care—Singular affection of the Duc d'Orléans for his eldest daughter—Unsuccessful endeavour of the Duchesse d'Orléans to obtain precedence for her children over the Princes and Princesses of the Blood—She determines to marry *Mademoiselle* to the Duc de Berry, youngest son of the Dauphin—Diplomatic move of the young princess—Obstacles in the way of the proposed marriage—Intrigues of Saint-Simon and the Duchesse de Bourgogne on behalf of *Mademoiselle*—Louis XIV. decides in favour of that princess and obliges the Dauphin to consent to the marriage—The Duc de Berry—Anecdotes of his boyhood—His appearance and character—Visit of *Mademoiselle* to Versailles—A singular imbroglio—Marriage of the Duc de Berry and *Mademoiselle*—Early years of Mlles. de Chartres and de Valois, second and third daughters of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans—The two little princesses are sent to the Abbey of Chelles.

A REFERENCE to the list given in the preceding chapter will show that the six daughters of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans may be divided into two series, since only five years separate the eldest, *Mademoiselle*, from her third sister, Mlle. de Valois; while more than nine intervene between the birth of Mlle. de Valois, in the last year of the seventeenth century, and that of Mlle. de Montpensier, in 1709. The three first, therefore, were already finishing their education when their younger sisters came into the world.

Little information is to be gleaned from the memoirs and correspondence of the time concerning the early years of any of these princesses. But that little is enough to show that they passed a strange childhood, between a

vain and selfish mother, who cared nothing for them, and was not ashamed to let it be seen that she regarded them as "encumbrances"; a dissipated father, who loved them, it is true, but who knew no other way of showing his affection than by spoiling and amusing himself with them, and a grandmother, kindly and well-meaning, but jealous and vindictive, who was far more ready to criticise the education they were receiving than to attempt to remedy its defects, and whose chief object seems to have been to monopolise their childish affections to the detriment of their parents.

And so they grew up, unsurrounded by any serious affection and without any proper control being exercised over them, allowed to quarrel with one another unrebuked, and to follow each her own particular inclinations. For those who were placed in charge of them, as is very frequently the case, finding the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans too absorbed in their own affairs to interest themselves in the education of their daughters, seem to have made no effort to check the faults of the latter, so long as these did not happen to interfere with their own ease and comfort. We shall soon see the consequences of this deplorable apathy.

It is, however, only just to the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans to observe that, if they were indifferent to the moral welfare of their children, they were not indifferent to their bodily health. Thus, in the autumn of 1706, when *Mademoiselle* was attacked by smallpox, the duchess became, for the moment, a true mother, shutting herself up with the sick child and assisting to nurse her; while, some years earlier, the same little princess had undoubtedly owed her life to her father's

care, although most people will be of opinion that it would have been infinitely better for the reputation of both if Death had not been cheated of his prey.

In the early summer of 1701, when *Mademoiselle* was not quite six years old, she fell ill, at Saint-Cloud, of a malady the nature of which seems to have puzzled completely the doctors who attended her, and her condition speedily became so alarming that all hope was abandoned, and "for six hours she was believed to be dead."[1] It was then that her father, who was an enthusiastic student of chemistry—an enthusiasm which was to be largely responsible for the terrible suspicions concerning him at the time of the successive deaths of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne and their infant son, the Duc de Bretagne, eleven years later—undertook to cure her, and, to the general astonishment and the chagrin of the physicians, was successful. From that moment dates the singular affection of Philippe d'Orléans for his eldest daughter, which, degenerating as time went on and the girl grew more attractive, into the most fatal weakness and indulgence, was to exercise so pernicious an influence upon her character, and to be interpreted so odiously.

When *Mademoiselle* was ten years old, she was honoured, one evening at Versailles, by an invitation to sup at the King's table, and to follow him into his cabinet afterwards. In a Court where the least details of etiquette were regarded as of more importance than the fate of empires, this incident provoked the liveliest discussion, since the Princesses of the Blood were not ordinarily admitted to his Majesty's table, save on the occasion of some great ceremony. It would appear that the Duchesse

[1] *Journal de Dangeau*, June 28, 1701.

d'Orléans was so puffed up with vanity at the honour conferred upon her daughter, that Louis XIV. was obliged to intimate to her that it was merely a passing favour, and must in no wise be interpreted as giving her precedence over the other Princesses of the Blood.

To secure this precedence for her children was one of the most cherished ambitions of the duchess, and she prosecuted it with an energy and a tenacity of purpose really astonishing in a woman of her indolent temperament. But, as we have said, when a question arose which touched her pride, she invariably shook off her habitual lethargy and became another person altogether. It had long been a source of the keenest mortification to her that, although she had the rank of a " granddaughter of France," her children, while taking precedence of the children of the Princes of the Blood, should be obliged to yield the *pas* to the Princes themselves and to their wives and widows. But, since a direct attack upon so long-established a custom offered little promise of success, she determined, towards the end of 1709, to endeavour, so to speak, to turn the position by inventing the title of " great-grandson and great-granddaughters of France." This project at first met with scant encouragement from her husband, but the duchess was not disheartened, and at length persuaded him to give it his support.

The little Duc de Chartres, who was barely six years of age, was, of course, too young to be made the instrument of his ambitious mother ; but *Mademoiselle* was now in her fifteenth year, and, thanks to her unfortunate education and the fatal indulgence of her father, already possessed the most exalted idea of her own importance. She lived at the Palais-Royal, surrounded, like her

mother, by a sort of little Court of sycophantic ladies, who vied with one another in flattering and spoiling her, and was "haughty and absolute in regard to all things that she desired." Soon the persistent manner in which the Duchesse d'Orléans kept her eldest daughter aloof from Court ceremonies began to arouse suspicion; and all doubt as to that lady's pretensions was dispelled when it was known that *Mademoiselle* had refused her signature to a marriage-contract, because her mother did not wish her to sign her name after the Princes of the Blood.

This affair, we are assured, created a great sensation; the Princes and Princesses of the Blood were furiously indignant, and *Madame la Duchesse* expressed her opinion to her sister in terms more forcible than courteous. The latter, undismayed by the storm which she had provoked, stood her ground firmly, and for several months the Court was divided into rival camps, since Louis XIV., always very slow in coming to a decision, particularly on questions of etiquette, hesitated to make a pronouncement. At length, however, after the sudden death of *Monsieur le Duc*, at the beginning of March 1710, the King, at the request of the Duc d'Orléans, who represented to him the necessity, in the circumstances, of putting an end to the quarrel between the widowed duchess and her sister, gave his decision against the pretensions of the latter.

The Duchesse d'Orléans took this defeat so much to heart that, as soon as it was announced to her, she shut herself up in her own apartments, on the plea of indisposition, and refused to see any one with the exception of *Mademoiselle*. On the morrow, powerless to dissimu-

late the mortification she felt at the triumph of *Madame la Duchesse*, and what she was pleased to consider the affront which had been inflicted upon her, she quitted Versailles for Saint-Cloud, and, notwithstanding the representations of her husband, declined to allow *Mademoiselle* to appear at any of the Lenten services which the King attended, because at these the Princesses were placed according to their rank.

From Saint-Cloud, the duchess proceeded to the Palais-Royal, whither the duke followed her, in the hope of inducing her to return to Court; but, though Saint-Simon added his persuasions to his, she remained inflexible. Her obstinacy was the more surprising, since, on learning of the King's decision, she had announced her intention of moving heaven and earth to bring about the marriage of *Mademoiselle* to the Duc de Berry, the youngest son of the Dauphin and brother of the Duc de Bourgogne and Philip V. of Spain, in order to secure for her daughter by this means the honours she was unable to obtain otherwise, and had drafted a letter to Madame de Maintenon, soliciting her support for this project. Saint-Simon did not fail to represent to her that the unfortunate impression which her absence from Court, and of *Mademoiselle* from the Lenten services, could not fail to create in the King's mind must seriously compromise the chances of the marriage she desired; but all to no purpose. "She listened to all I had to say," he writes, "thanked me coldly, and, with a vexation tempered by courtesy, informed me that it would not shake her resolution."

Meanwhile, Louis XIV. had manifested his displeasure at the conduct of the duchess and her daughter in so unmistakable a manner, that the Duchesse de Bourgogne,

who, as we shall presently see, had private reasons of her own for desiring the marriage of *Mademoiselle* and the Duc de Berry, resolved to intervene. She accordingly sent for the young princess, pointed out to her, "with the kindness of a mother," what would be the inevitable consequence of the obstinacy of the Duchesse d'Orléans, and implored her to appear at one service at least before Easter. *Mademoiselle*, whose precocious vanity was flattered by the hope of an alliance which would make her the first lady in the land after the Duchesse de Bourgogne herself, and even invest her with eventual rights to the Crown matrimonial, appreciated the wisdom of this advice, and, since she had no affection for her mother, and was aware that her father strongly disapproved of the latter's conduct and that she could count on his support, promised to follow it. A day or two later, accordingly, she went to the chapel of Versailles, and took her place among the Princesses of the Blood, as though nothing had happened.

There can be no doubt that the Duc d'Orléans both knew and approved of his favourite daughter's action; but it came as a complete surprise to the duchess, who was so enraged that, according to Saint-Simon, "she did not cease to weep the entire day." Eventually, however, she was obliged to recognise that *Mademoiselle*, in bowing to the King's decision, even in defiance of her injunctions, had done very wisely, and raised no further objection to her daughter taking the place his Majesty had assigned her. Thus, the situation was saved, and the chances of the marriage, which for the moment had seemed hopelessly compromised, re-established.

These chances, however, had never been such as to

justify any very confident hopes of success; indeed, the obstacles which presented themselves were of the most formidable nature.

It was well known that Louis XIV. was anxious for the marriage of the Duc de Berry, who was now twenty-three years of age, and had begun to take so much pleasure in feminine society that his Majesty feared that, if he did not speedily provide him with a wife, he might engage in some *liaison* from which it would be difficult to detach him, or possibly follow his own and *Monseigneur's* example and contract a morganatic union.[1] It was also true that, since France was at war with the chief Catholic States of Europe, with the exception of Spain and Bavaria, where there were no princesses of marriageable age, a foreign alliance was out of the question, and that he must perforce wed a French princess, that is to say, either *Mademoiselle* or Mlle. de Bourbon, eldest daughter of *Madame la Duchesse*,[2] since they were the only princesses of marriageable age.

Well, in ordinary circumstances, the fact that *Mademoiselle* was the daughter of the head of the younger branch of the Royal Family, while her cousin was only the daughter of the First Prince of the Blood, would have been generally regarded as sufficient to entitle her to the preference. But the Duc d'Orléans was in very bad odour with the King, owing to the intrigues for his own aggrandizement which he had carried on with the Allies when commanding in Spain two years before, and his

[1] There can, we think, be no more doubt that the Dauphin was secretly married to Mlle. Choin than that his father was the husband of Madame de Maintenon.

[2] Louise Élisabeth de Bourbon-Condé, born November 22, 1693.

debauched life; he was disliked by Madame de Maintenon, and simply detested by the Dauphin, "who always displayed his hatred in the most indecent manner."[1] Moreover, *Monseigneur*, while caring little for his younger sister, was warmly attached to *Madame la Duchesse*, who spent a good deal of her time at his country-house at Meudon; and Mlle. de Bourbon, besides being two years older than *Mademoiselle*, and therefore nearer the Duc de Berry's age, was by far the more pleasing of the two young ladies. Most people accordingly inclined to the belief that the King's decision would be in her favour.

Fortunately for *Mademoiselle*, she possessed in the Duchesse de Bourgogne and Saint-Simon two invaluable allies.

The prospect of a match between the Duc de Berry and the daughter of *Madame la Duchesse*, who cherished the bitterest jealousy and hatred of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and was the moving spirit of the "Cabal of Meudon," which had for some time past been intriguing actively to destroy the credit of her and her husband, was not one which that princess could afford to regard with complacency. In the first place, it would probably result in the Duc de Berry, hitherto warmly attached to his brother and to herself, being drawn into the ranks of the opposing faction, and would certainly strengthen the influence of *Madame la Duchesse* over *Monseigneur*, already estranged from his eldest son. In the second, she was well aware of the power of novelty over Louis XIV.'s mind—was not her own exceptional favour a signal example of it?—and feared that if a young,

[1] Saint-Simon.

pretty, and vivacious girl, like Mlle. de Bourbon, were admitted to the King's circle, she might find in her a dangerous rival. On the other hand, she and her husband had nothing to fear from the marriage of the Duc de Berry with *Mademoiselle*. They had always been on very friendly terms with the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans ; while the girl herself, though not unattractive in person, possessed none of the qualities which were likely to appeal to the King.

Saint-Simon had also excellent reasons for desiring to prevent the elevation of a daughter of *Madame la Duchesse*, his devotion to the interests of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne having greatly incensed that princess against him ; indeed, he declares that the marriage of Mlle. de Bourbon would have been " like a millstone falling upon his head." On the other hand, his close friendship with the Orléans family made him naturally anxious to strengthen their position. If we are to believe him, it was he who aroused the Duchesse de Bourgogne to a sense of her " great duty to herself, which was perpetually in danger of being stifled by the fictitious and petty duties of daily life," and he certainly seems to have displayed almost superhuman energy in the struggle which ensued, not even disdaining to make use of his enemies the Jesuits, who, he confesses, became " a powerful instrument." It may be questioned, however, if " all the machines which he regularly wound up in reciprocal cadence every day " would have succeeded in breaking down the aversion of Louis XIV., Madame de Maintenon, and *Monseigneur* to a marriage which would so much increase the importance of a man whom they all three regarded with aversion, had it not been

for the persistence and address with which the Duchesse de Bourgogne seconded their efforts.

A little before Easter, the duchess having succeeded in gaining over Madame de Maintenon, and having reason to believe that the King, thanks to the diplomatic conduct of *Mademoiselle*, was not unfavourably inclined, resolved to attempt a grand coup. One day, when *Mademoiselle* had been taken to see the King at Madame de Maintenon's, where the Dauphin also happened to be, as soon as the young princess had gone out, she began to praise her, and on a sudden, "with that predetermined impulsiveness which she sometimes employed," exclaimed: "What an admirable wife for the Duc de Berry!" At these words, *Monseigneur* coloured with vexation, and observed angrily that "that would be an excellent method of recompensing the Duc d'Orléans for his conduct in Spain." With which he abruptly quitted the room, leaving the company all very much astonished, since no one had expected a person usually so phlegmatic and indifferent to exhibit so much feeling. The Duchesse de Bourgogne, "who had only spoken with the object of feeling the way with *Monseigneur* in the presence of the King," promptly took advantage of the mistake that prince had committed. "*Ma tante*," said she, turning with a pretty air of bewilderment to Madame de Maintenon, "have I said something foolish?" The King, annoyed by the brusqueness of the Dauphin, answered for Madame de Maintenon, and said, warmly, that, if *Madame la Duchesse* assumed that tone and was working to gain over *Monseigneur*, she would have to reckon with him. Upon which Madame de Maintenon adroitly fanned the flame, by remarking on the irritation,

so very unusual in him, which *Monseigneur* had shown, adding that, if *Madame la Duchesse* had so much influence, she would make him do other things of more consequence. Thus, the ruse of the Duchesse de Bourgogne succeeded beyond her hopes, and before the company dispersed, "the attachment of the Dauphin to *Madame la Duchesse* had done more injury to Mlle. de Bourbon than it could ever serve her." [1]

Saint-Simon, informed of what had occurred, lost no time in bringing all his batteries into play—to borrow his own expression—and kept up so brisk and well-directed a fire that the breach already made in the defences widened daily, and he soon perceived that the moment had arrived to deliver the final assault. He therefore pressed the Duc d'Orléans to speak to the King, but, to his disgust, that prince, "who was like a motionless beam which stirred only in response to our redoubled efforts, and who remained so to the conclusion of this great business," immediately began to raise all kinds of objections. Saint-Simon, however, continued to press him, and at last he gave way and agreed to write to the King.

It was then decided that they should each draft a letter, and that the one which appeared the most suitable should be submitted to his Majesty. Saint-Simon's pen was soon speeding over the paper, but, when he had finished, he perceived that the Duc d'Orléans had not yet written a line and appeared lost in reflection. He therefore suggested that, as the prince found so much difficulty in composing a letter himself, he had better copy his own, which the latter did, without making any im-

[1] Saint-Simon.

portant changes, signed, sealed it, and placed it in his pocket. There it remained for a week, and might have remained indefinitely but for the persistence of Saint-Simon, who, one morning, when he had ascertained that Louis XIV. happened to be in an exceptionally good-humour, conducted him to the door of Madame de Maintenon's apartment, whither his Majesty had, as usual, repaired after Mass, and almost pushed him into the room.

The Duc d'Orléans lost nothing by the timidity with which he approached his Majesty, for it always flattered the pride of Louis XIV. to see himself feared ; and when persons, particularly members of his own family, showed diffidence in his presence, nothing pleased him more or more effectually served their cause. He placed the letter which his nephew handed him in his pocket, without opening it ; but he spoke to him very graciously indeed ; and the prince quitted the room in a much more cheerful frame of mind than he had entered it.

His hopes were justified, for, on the morrow, the King sent for him, and informed him that the suggested marriage between his eldest daughter and the Duc de Berry met with his entire approval, adding, however, that *Monseigneur* was much opposed to the project, and that " he would take his time to speak to him on the matter."

With victory fairly in sight, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, Saint-Simon and their allies redoubled their efforts ; and, though *Madame la Duchesse* and her friends endeavoured to snatch it from them, by circulating the most abominable rumours in regard to the relations between the Duc d'Orléans and his daughter, which appear to have been the starting-point for the reports of a similar nature so

prevalent during the Regency, the only result was to precipitate matters; and, on June 1, Louis XIV., piqued by the insinuations skilfully conveyed to him that he did not dare to impose his will upon his son, sent for the Dauphin and bluntly proposed to him the match, " in the tone of a father, mingled with that of a King and a master."

Monseigneur, much astonished, stammered and hesitated, but ended by promising compliance with the paternal wishes, stipulating only that the official announcement should be postponed for a few days, in order that he might have time to accustom himself to the idea of a marriage which was so little to his liking. To this the King graciously consented, warning him, however, that there must be no going back upon his word. Then he sent to inform the Duc d'Orléans of the result of his interview with *Monseigneur*, authorising him to tell his wife, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and Madame de Maintenon. Finally, it occurred to his Majesty that it might be as well, as a mere matter of form, to acquaint the Duc de Berry, who, up to the present, would appear to have been in complete ignorance of all the intrigues and negotiations which had been going on for his settlement in life, of the fate in store for him.

On the morrow, accordingly, he took his grandson into his cabinet, and inquired if he would like to get married, to which the prince replied evasively by an assurance of his willingness to submit in all things to his Majesty's orders. " The King then asked him if he would have any repugnance to espouse *Mademoiselle*, the only princess in France, added he, who was suitable for him, since, in the present circumstances, it was impossible to think of any

foreign princess. The Duc de Berry answered that he would obey the King with pleasure, whereupon the King informed him that it was his intention to have the marriage celebrated immediately, and that *Monseigneur* consented to it, but that he forbade him to speak about it."[1] And the bridegroom-elect, who had an engagement to go wolf-hunting with his brother, the Duc de Bourgogne, made his reverence, and hurried away to put on his riding-dress.

Charles, Duc de Berry, the young prince who had just received the news of the disposal of his hand with so much complacency, was, as we have mentioned, the youngest of the three sons of *Monseigneur*, by his marriage with that strange creature, Maria Anna of Bavaria—"*la Dauphine de Bavière*," as historians call her. As a lad, he was a more engaging personality than either of his brothers, and his high spirits and frank, boyish face made him a universal favourite. *Madame*, whom his merry prattle never failed to amuse, was much attached to him, and his mother, noticing that lady's partiality for her little son, had playfully dubbed him "*le Berry de Madame*." The old princess, in her correspondence, relates several amusing anecdotes of her favourite's boyhood.

"I enjoyed myself at table," she writes, in December 1697, in describing the family dinner which followed the marriage of the Duc de Bourgogne, "for I was sitting next to my dear Duc de Berry [*aetat.* eleven at this time], and he made me laugh. 'I can see my brother ogling his little wife,' said he; 'but, if I wished, I could ogle quite as well; you have to look steadily, sideways.'

[1] Saint-Simon.

Saying which, he imitated his brother so drolly that I was obliged to laugh."

Some months later, the Duc de Berry, in company with his two elder brothers and the Duchesse de Bourgogne, witnessed a performance of Molière's *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, at the Comédie-Française. This was the first visit to a theatre that any of the three young princes had been permitted to pay, and their delight must have afforded the audience as much diversion as the antics of the immortal M. Jourdain. "The Duc de Bourgogne," writes *Madame*, "quite lost his gravity and laughed till the tears came into his eyes; the Duc d'Anjou was so delighted that he sat in ecstasies, with his mouth wide open; the Duc de Berry laughed so much that he nearly fell off his chair."[1]

Notwithstanding his merry and good-natured disposition, as a boy, the Duc de Berry, like his eldest brother, the Duc de Bourgogne, was cursed with a most ungovernable temper, though happily it was not very often that it broke out. On these occasions, however, it must have been a sight not easily forgotten by those so unfortunate as to witness it. *Madame* relates how, one day, when he was about thirteen years of age, he went out shooting with his brothers, and, in spite of strict injunctions from his *sous-gouverneur*, Razilly, shot so recklessly that he came within a few inches of killing the Duc de Bourgogne.[2] Razilly took the gun away and refused to allow him to fire again, "whereupon he flew

[1] *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé), Letter of November 1, 1698.

[2] The Duc de Berry appears to have been a decidedly dangerous person with whom to go out shooting, even when he had grown up. In the winter of 1712, while taking part in a battue at Marly, with his eldest brother and the Duc de Bourbon, he had the misfortune to destroy the sight of one of the latter's eyes.

Charles de France, Duc de Berry

From a contemporary print

into so terrible a passion that he tried to dash out his own brains ; and would have succeeded, if they had not taken away from him a huge stone which he had seized in his hands." For this mad conduct and for the abuse which he heaped upon his unfortunate *sous-gouverneur*, Louis XIV. caused him to be placed for a week in solitary confinement, in order that he might have leisure for repentance ; but, since, we are told, he " did nothing but dance and sing," it can scarcely have produced the result desired. However, in time, he appears altogether to have outgrown these fits of passion.

Now, in his twenty-fourth year, the Duc de Berry was a handsome, fair-haired, fresh-complexioned, rather stout young man, modest, simple in his tastes, good-humoured, generous, honourable, and well-meaning, but a little stupid and entirely futile ; for he had never shown the least interest in his studies or, indeed, in anything serious, and cared for nothing in the world but amusement. " Provided that he enjoys himself, he cares not how," writes *Madame*, who was sorely disappointed in her favourite. " Here are his ordinary amusements : he shoots, plays cards, chatters with young ladies, and guzzles. Such are his pleasures. I had almost forgotten to add that he slides on the ice ; for that comes in too."[1]

[1] The Duc de Berry was, nevertheless, painfully conscious of his mental deficiencies, and this often seems to have paralysed what abilities he possessed, and made him appear far more vacuous than he really was. Saint-Simon relates how on the occasion of the sitting of the Parlement at Paris, at which the prince formally renounced all rights to the Crown of Spain, he was required to make a short speech, in reply to that of the First President. Saint-Simon composed it for him, and he learned it by heart, and repeated it quite correctly to Madame de Saint-Simon the night before the ceremony. Nevertheless, on the morrow, so great was his embarrassment that he was unable to remember a single word.

But if his life were entirely futile, it was also entirely harmless, for " he had very good sense, and was capable of listening, of understanding, and of always taking the right side in preference to the wrong, however speciously put."[1] Moreover, he had resisted the temptations to which his father and grandfather had succumbed, and, if he never showed any marked piety, he entertained a sincere respect for religion.

Such was the Duc de Berry, a prince, who, notwithstanding the aimlessness of the existence which he had led hitherto, possessed qualities out of which a good and clever woman might have fashioned a not unworthy representative of his race; for he was one of those men who are born to be dominated by their wives. But, unhappily, no one was less likely to effect this than the wife who had been chosen for him—a spoiled, petulant young girl, accustomed to submit to no restraint, and with no guiding principle save her own caprices.

On June 3, the Dauphin having prudently decided to accept the inevitable with the best grace he could, the forthcoming marriage of the Duc de Berry and *Mademoiselle* was publicly announced by Louis XIV., at Marly. On the following day, *Mademoiselle* arrived from Versailles with her parents, and, after being joined by *Madame*, proceeded to the King's apartments, where they found his Majesty, with *Monseigneur*, the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne, the Duc de Berry, and the principal officers of the Court. " *Madame* presented *Mademoiselle* to the King; she knelt at his feet, but the King immediately raised her up and embraced her, and forthwith presented her to *Monseigneur*, to the Duc and Duchesse de Bour-

[1] Saint-Simon.

gogne, and then to all the Court." The King, to relieve their embarrassment, "with that grace which he showed in all things," forbade *Mademoiselle* to speak to any one, and the Duc de Berry to speak to her, and promptly cut short the interview. On leaving the royal presence, *Mademoiselle*, accompanied by her relatives, paid visits to the Princes and Princesses of the Blood, in order to receive their compliments; and the same evening returned to Versailles.

Since it was intended that the marriage should take place as soon as the necessary dispensation for the union of blood-relations should arrive from Rome, the King lost no time in forming the Households of the Duc de Berry and his bride-elect. The most important post in the latter's, that of *dame d'honneur*, which carried with it a salary of 20,000 livres, was given, or rather—if we are to believe Saint-Simon—forced upon his wife, "who received the news of her appointment with tears." This was an excellent selection, for all contemporary writers render homage to the virtues of the Duchesse de Saint-Simon; but Louis XIV. showed very little discretion in filling the other posts about the young princess's person; indeed, merit seems to have played an even less conspicuous part than usual in determining his choice. Thus, the *dame d'atours*, Madame de la Vieuville, was a confirmed *intrigante*, and the first waiting-woman, Mlle. de la Devaize, owed her appointment to the favour of the Duchesse d'Orléans, of whom she was one of the most assiduous flatterers.

The Papal dispensation having arrived, at five o'clock in the evening of July 5, the marriage-contract was signed in the King's cabinet at Versailles. This ceremony gave

rise to a piquant incident. It was the custom for the *fiancée* to wear upon these occasions a velvet mantle lined with ermine, the train of which was borne by a princess of equal rank to her own. Well, the sisters of the future Duchesse de Berry, Mlles. de Chartres and de Valois, had lately been sent to the Abbey of Chelles, and, since there were no "daughters" or "granddaughters of France," the duty reverted, by the irony of Fate, to her vanquished rival, Mlle. de Bourbon!

The indignation of *Madame la Duchesse*, already deeply incensed by the defeat which she had recently sustained, may be imagined when she learned of the bitter humiliation in store for her daughter. Was it not enough that the Orléans should have succeeded, by the aid of the most unscrupulous intrigues, in snatching from her the rich prize which had once been almost within her grasp, that her child should be expected to grace their triumph? How was it possible that the King could permit her to be thus publicly humiliated? And she besieged his Majesty with tears and lamentations.

The King sympathised with his elder daughter and Mlle. de Bourbon, but he was too great a slave to etiquette even to contemplate a departure from established usage. He sought, however, to circumvent the difficulty, and accordingly requested the Duc d'Orléans to make his daughters return for the ceremony. The duke did not dare to refuse, and, to the disgust of his spiteful consort, who was unwilling to spare her detested sister this crowning mortification, and had no doubt hastened the departure of her daughters for Chelles with the express purpose of creating the present imbroglio, the little girls were sent for. Being unwilling, however, that the Court should

believe that *Madame la Duchesse* had succeeded in thwarting her amiable intentions, she resolved to invent a colourable pretext for their return, and, having given out that they had only as yet been *ondoyées*, she caused them, on July 3, to proceed to the supplementary ceremonies of baptism. It is, however, doubtful if many people were deceived by this rather transparent fiction, and, any way, *Madame la Duchesse* had the satisfaction of seeing Mlle. de Chartres bearing the train of the bride-elect's mantle instead of her own daughter.

On the day after the betrothal ceremony (July 6), the marriage was celebrated in the chapel of the Château of Versailles, by the Cardinal de Janson, before a brilliant assemblage. Afterwards, the bride and bridegroom dined alone with the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the dinner being followed by a card-party, at which the stakes as usual ruled pretty high.[1] In the evening, the King gave a sumptuous supper, to which all the Princes and Princesses were invited. Supper over, the company escorted the bridal pair to their apartments, through the midst of a crowd of courtiers, who had ranged themselves in the form of a hedge. Among the crowd were a number of swell mobsmen from Paris, some of whom were disguised as priests, others as officers in the Army. But they got very little for their trouble, as people had been warned

[1] Fortune would not appear to have smiled upon the Duc de Berry on this occasion, since, we learn, that, shortly afterwards, he was obliged to abstain from the card-table, as he had not sufficient money to play with. "The Duchesse de Bourgogne," writes Saint-Simon, "informed the King of this; and the King, feeling the state in which he himself was, said that he had only five hundred pistoles [about five thousand francs] to give him. He gave them with an excuse on the misfortunes of the time, because the Duchesse de Bourgogne thought, with reason, that a little was better than nothing, and that it was insufferable not to be able to play."

by the Lieutenant of Police to be on their guard, and the only loss of any note was a valuable watch belonging to a Mlle. Voisin.

On reaching the nuptial chamber, the Cardinal de Janson pronounced the benediction of the bed; the King handed the nightshirt to his grandson, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne performed the same service for the bride. The happy pair then got into bed; the Duc de Beauvilliers, on the bridegroom's side, and Madame de Saint-Simon, on that of the bride, drew the curtains, "laughing together at being so employed";[1] and the company solemnly filed out of the room in order of precedence, the King leading the way.

On the morrow, after Mass, Louis XIV. came to visit the Duchesse de Berry; and during her toilette the princess received the homage of the courtiers, who were presented to her by Madame de Saint-Simon, in her capacity as *dame d'honneur*. As on the previous day, the Duc and Duchesse de Berry dined and played cards in the apartments of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and then returned to their own, to receive a visit from the exiled Queen of England.

Thus began the married life of Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Berry, but, before speaking of that, let us say a few words about the early years of her younger sisters, Mlles. de Chartres and de Valois.

These two young ladies, aged respectively eleven and nine, had been leading a neglected and monotonous existence in the Palais-Royal, varied by frequent quarrels with their elder sister and visits to their grandmother at

[1] Saint-Simon.

Saint-Cloud. Mlle. de Chartres was a pretty little girl, of a frank, open disposition, very independent and self-willed, but remarkably quick and intelligent. She shared the studies of her brother, the little Duc de Chartres, and since that prince was generally idle and inattentive, his tutor, the Abbé de Montgaut, preferred to address himself to the young princess, who showed a real eagerness to profit by his instruction, and was particularly interested in theology.

Mlle. de Valois was not so pretty as her sister, and an altogether less pleasing personality. She did not lack intelligence, when she chose to exercise it, which, however, very seldom happened in the schoolroom, since she had inherited not a little of her mother's indolence. She showed, too, even thus early, that she possessed another of the maternal failings, which was to develop so rapidly that, seven years later, *Madame* wrote: "The Duchesse d'Orléans would be the most deceitful person in the world, if it were not for her daughter, Mlle. de Valois. She is even worse. I think it horrible to find such deceitfulness in a person so young."[1] In addition, the little princess does not appear to have been endowed with the sweetest of tempers.

The Duchesse d'Orléans considered that it would be very embarrassing to keep two girls of eleven and nine near a married sister who had not yet completed her fifteenth year; and as soon as the marriage of *Mademoiselle* was definitely arranged, she decided to confide them to the care of some religious house. *Madame*, who was very fond of the children, and particularly of Mlle. de Chartres, offered to take charge of them and have them

[1] Letter of May 17, 1717.

brought up under her own eye at Saint-Cloud; but the Duchesse d'Orléans disliked her mother-in-law far too heartily to agree to this proposal. Besides, she hoped that, once in a convent, both girls would ere long discover that they had a vocation for the religious life, which would save her a great deal of trouble and anxiety in years to come.

"The Duc d'Orléans places his daughters in religion to the number of two," writes Madame d'Huxelles, under date June 7, 1710, "for there is a third, who is as yet only five or six months old.[1] These two elder princesses are in despair at this decision. It is the Abbey of Chelles, whither they will proceed when their apartments have been made ready, and the Maréchale de Villars goes to arrange about that to-day."[2]

The preparations for the reception of the two little princesses were soon completed, and on June 9 they set out for Chelles, "accompanied by a *sous-gouvernante* and six unmarried waiting-women, as the abbess had demanded." The poor children, who would have infinitely preferred to remain under their grandmother's care at Saint-Cloud, regarded the prospect before them with anything but pleasurable anticipation, and were "in such a state of distress that they passed through Paris with the curtains of their carriage closed." The following day, Dangeau records that the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans had gone to Chelles to visit their daughters.

The Abbey of Chelles, the convent selected for Mlles. de Chartres and de Valois, was situated between Lagny

[1] Louise Élisabeth, Mlle. de Montpensier, born December 11, 1709.
[2] *Lettres de la Marquise d'Huxelles*, cited by Barthélemy.

and Meaux, and was one of the most celebrated houses of the Benedictine Order in France. It owed its first foundation to Sainte-Clotilde, but its real founder was Sainte-Bathilde, wife of Clovis II., who, about 662, rebuilt the convent on a much more extensive scale, and who, when her son, Clotaire II., was of an age to reign, retired thither to spend the remaining years of her life. The example of this pious queen had attracted to Chelles several distinguished personages; Sonichilde, wife of Charles Martel, had taken the veil there; Giselle, sister of Charlemagne; Hermentrude, widow of Charles *le Chauve;* Bathilde, daughter of the same Sovereign; and, in later times, Marie Henriette de Bourbon, natural daughter of Henri IV. and Henriette d'Entragues, had all held the office of abbess; and throughout the ages it had always maintained its character as an eminently aristocratic house. The discipline imposed upon its inmates, severe at first, was gradually relaxed as time went on, until, towards the end of the fifteenth century, the bishops of Paris found themselves compelled to interfere and to introduce some rather drastic reforms. It is doubtful if the desired result was completely attained; any way, it was not permanent; and, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Chelles was generally regarded as a place where the superfluous daughters of noble families might prepare themselves for a future life without altogether renouncing the comforts of this.

The abbey was a vast and imposing building, shut in by high and massive walls, and standing in the midst of extensive grounds, which comprised not only very beautiful gardens shaded by stately elms and venerable limes, and gay in summer-time with a wealth of flowers, but

orchards, kitchen-gardens and fishponds, the contents of which doubtless contributed not a little to console the good sisters for the fasts which the Church imposed. In fact, it would be difficult to imagine a more pleasant retreat from the world.

In 1709, the monastery had for its abbess, Agnès de Villars, sister of the celebrated marshal, upon whom the office had been conferred some two years before. This lady, who had previously been prioress of the Benedictine abbey of Saint-André-le-Haut, at Vienne, enjoyed a great reputation for piety, but she was harsh, austere, and haughty, and exceedingly jealous of her authority, " consoling herself by the joys of domination for the sacrifice of all the others."[1] In consequence, she was far from being beloved by those over whom she ruled, particularly by such of the novices as still regretted the world which they had left, and sought to prolong as much as possible their semi-liberty and to lengthen their road towards the final renunciation by all kinds of pretexts. From the first, the abbess and the self-willed and quick-witted little Mlle. de Chartres seem to have been antagonistic; and when, eight years later, the princess having pronounced her vows, made up her mind to supplant her, their relations became very strained indeed.

The prioress, Madame de Fretteville, was an infinitely more attractive personality: sweet-tempered, kind, motherly, and sympathetic. As mistress of the novices, she had learned to understand young girls and to make them love her, and she soon acquired a considerable in-

[1] Lescure, *les Confessions de l'abbesse de Chelles : Louise-Adélaïde d'Orléans*, a fictitious autobiography, which, however, contains a good deal of valuable information.

fluence over Mlle. de Chartres, and contributed powerfully to develop her taste for the religious life and to determine her to take the veil. Probably, she tried to persuade Mlle. de Valois to edify the world by a similar renunciation of its pleasures, but, if so, the seed she sowed fell on barren ground.

The latter princess remained at Chelles until the beginning of August 1714, when she quitted it never to return ; Mlle. de Chartres's first sojourn at the abbey of which she was one day to be the head lasted until October 1715. Beyond recording the appearance of the two girls at the marriage of their eldest sister, the chroniclers are silent concerning their life during these years, which was no doubt the usual monotonous, but not unpleasant, one of high-born little *pensionnaires* in a convent. The visit which their parents had paid them on the morrow of their arrival does not seem to have been repeated—at any rate, Dangeau, so careful to record the minutest details concerning the movements of the different members of the Royal House, makes no mention of it. But we can well understand that the Duchesse d'Orléans, anxious that both princesses should enter religion, was unwilling to do anything which might distract their thoughts from the direction in which she hoped they were tending.

CHAPTER III

The Duchesse de Berry—Her portrait by Largillière—*Madame's* description of her—Her odious character—Her intimacy with the Duchesse de Bourgogne—Her jealousy of that princess—Her husband's infatuation for her—She gets disgracefully intoxicated at Saint-Cloud—She joins the " Cabal of Meudon "—Rupture between her and the Duchesse de Bourgogne—She persuades the Duc de Berry to break off his friendly relations with his sister-in-law—She is severely reprimanded by the King—Illness and death of the Dauphin—Despair of the Duchesse de Berry, who sees all her plans ruined by this event—Magnanimity of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, now Dauphine—Indignation of the Duchesse de Berry at being compelled to render ceremonial service to her sister-in-law—Abominable rumours concerning her relations with her father—Saint-Simon informs the Duc d'Orléans of these, and the prince, to his astonishment and indignation, reports the conversation to his daughter—The Duchesse de Berry gives birth prematurely to a daughter—Insolence of the princess towards her mother—*Madame* is charged by the King to reprimand her granddaughter—Mlle. de Vienne—The affair of the diamond necklace.

ON her marriage-day, the Duchesse de Berry was within just five weeks of completing her fifteenth year. A charming painting of her by Largillière shows us a very attractive, if somewhat buxom, young girl, in a white gown sewn and clasped with emeralds and diamonds, playing with some tall poppies, which are shedding their leaves, and holding in her pretty, plump fingers the stalk of a clematis. The features, without having any pretence to beauty, are regular and pleasing; the hair abundant and of a very pretty shade of brown; the hands and arms well-formed; and there is a freshness, an ingenuousness, about her which is wholly de-

lightful. But Court painters at the beginning of the eighteenth century did not scruple to flatter their patrons —they would not, indeed, have been Court painters if they had not—and there can be little doubt that, in this instance, the counterfeit presentment is far more pleasing than the original.

Saint-Simon describes the princess as " tall, handsome, and well-made," though lacking in grace ; while the Duc de Berry, who speedily became enamoured of his young wife, thought her, according to *Madame*, " the prettiest person in the world, and that Helen was not half so beautiful "—an opinion which he shared with his father-in-law. *Madame*, on the other hand, denies that she was " pretty at all, either in face or figure. She is thick-set, with long arms and short hips ; she walks badly and is ungraceful in all her movements ; makes horrible faces ; has a discontented expression ; is marked by smallpox ; has red eyes—light blue in the iris—and a ruddy complexion, and looks much older than she is." In fact, the only attractions which her grandmother will allow her are her throat, hands, and arms, " which are perfectly beautiful, very white, and well-formed."

Whatever difference of opinion may exist in regard to the appearance of the Duchesse de Berry, there is unhappily none as to her character. All her contemporaries, all historians, are agreed that she was one of the most odious young women whom the Court of France had ever seen. She had all her mother's arrogance and deceit ; all her father's irreligion and licentiousness, to which she joined a violent temper, drunkenness, gluttony, a contemptuous disregard of ordinary decency, and a most foul tongue. In short, according to Saint-Simon, who

confesses that, if he had only known "the half-quarter —what do I say?—the thousandth part, of what we have unhappily been the witnesses," he would have laboured with even greater zeal to prevent her marriage to the Duc de Berry than he did to bring it about, she was a model of all the vices, avarice excepted. And yet, with all this, she was highly intelligent, and could, when she wished, be most agreeable and amiable, "speaking with an ease and precision that charmed and overpowered." But her undoubted talents were never employed for any good purpose, but merely to serve her own unworthy ends. Consequently, they made her only the more repulsive.

Until she was actually married, the Duchesse de Berry had succeeded in conveying the impression, save among those who knew her most intimately, that she was a damsel of a singularly modest and retiring disposition, and, even when leaving the chapel after the nuptial Mass, she had feigned the greatest reluctance to take precedence of her grandmother, as her new rank entitled her to do. "Push me then, Madame," said she to the old princess, who had motioned her to take the *pas*. "I must be pushed to make me pass before you, and I shall require some time yet to accustom myself to that honour."[1] But, once her brilliant position was assured, she was not long in giving the Court a glimpse of those qualities which were to secure for her such unenviable celebrity; though it was not until after the death of her husband and of Louis XIV. that she gave her vices a free rein.

During the first months of their married life she and her husband were on terms of the closest intimacy with

[1] *Journal de Dangeau*, July 6, 1710.

MARIE LOUISE ÉLISABETH D'ORLÉANS,
DUCHESSE DE BERRY

From an engraving after the painting by Largillière

the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne. The two brothers had always been on the most cordial terms, and, if only for her husband's sake, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who had worked so energetically to promote the marriage, was sincerely anxious to gain her sister-in-law's affection. Since the Household of the Duc and Duchesse de Berry was not finally organised until the end of the winter of 1711, owing to the fact that some months were required to complete the equipages, plate, and so forth which they would require, they accepted the hospitality of the Bourgogne *ménage*, and the two princesses were continually together. When the Duchesse de Berry did not follow the chase on horseback, she generally occupied a seat in her sister-in-law's carriage; they paid visits to Paris and made country-excursions in each other's company; dined together nearly every day, and, in a word, seemed the best of friends. But this intimacy did not last very long, for the younger princess possessed none of the lovable qualities which endeared the charming daughter of Victor Amadeus to all about her, and she was, in secret, bitterly jealous of the brilliant position to which the favour of Louis XIV. had raised her. She was displeased, too, by the affectionate relations which existed between the two brothers, and, as the Duc de Berry, "like all who marry very young and green,"[1] had begun his married life by falling very much in love with her, she exploited the influence which she soon obtained over this feeble prince to separate him from his elder brother, so that she might dominate him the more absolutely.

[1] Saint-Simon. The writer, however, forgets that the Duc de Berry did not marry until his twenty-fourth year, which was certainly not "very young" for a French prince.

A few months after her marriage, the Duchesse de Berry became in an interesting condition, but this did not prevent her from indulging her taste for wine and her gluttonous instincts. Hitherto these weaknesses had been rather suspected than known, since, when in the company of others, she had contrived to exercise some degree of moderation; but, on the occasion of a supper-party at Saint-Cloud, she behaved in a manner which effectually dispelled all doubts about the matter. Saint-Simon informs us of the incident, without dissimulating anything:

"I shall pass lightly over an event which, engrafted upon some others, made some noise, notwithstanding the care taken to hush it up. The Duchesse de Bourgogne supped at Saint-Cloud one evening with the Duchesse de Berry and others, Madame de Saint-Simon absenting herself from the party. The Duchesse de Berry and the Duc d'Orléans, but she more than he, got so drunk that the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the Duchesse d'Orléans, and the rest of the company knew not what to do. The Duc de Berry was there, and him they talked over as well as they could, and the numerous company was amused by the Grand Duchess,[1] to the best of her ability. The effect of the wine in more ways than one was such that people were troubled, and, since she could not be sobered, it became necessary to carry her back, drunk as she was, to Versailles. All the servants waiting with the carriages saw the condition she was in, and did not keep it to themselves; nevertheless, they succeeded in concealing it from

[1] Marguerite Louise d'Orléans, daughter of Gaston d'Orléans, younger brother of Louis XIII., and wife of Cosimo III., Grand Duke of Tuscany.

the King, from *Monseigneur*, and from Madame de Maintenon."[1]

For a time, the Duchesse de Berry continued to profess the warmest friendship for the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the while she studied the situation at Court and cast about her for the most effective means of injuring her unsuspecting sister-in-law. She soon perceived that the only menace to the credit of the Duchesse de Bourgogne lay in the "Cabal of Meudon," the little group of discontented and ambitious spirits, headed by *Madame la Duchesse* and her half-sister, the Princesse de Conti, who surrounded the Dauphin. The object of this cabal was twofold: to estrange *Monseigneur* from his eldest son and daughter-in-law, so as to insure that, when that prince should ascend the throne, they would be reduced to impotence, and to destroy the influence of the Duchesse de Bourgogne with the King. The defeat sustained by this faction over the recent marriage showed what little chance they possessed of succeeding in their second object; indeed, since the failure of their machinations against the Bourgognes at the time of the disastrous Oudenarde campaign two years before, they had almost abandoned hope in this direction, and had concentrated their efforts upon the first part of their programme, which

[1] This drunken orgy was followed, at a brief interval, by a gluttonous one, which was, if possible, even more revolting. Under date December 14, 1710, *Madame* writes: "Yesterday evening, the Duchesse de Berry gave us a great fright. She suddenly fainted dead away, and we thought it was an apoplectic seizure. However, after the Duchesse de Bourgogne had sprinkled her face with vinegar, she came to, and was dreadfully sick. It was not surprising. For two hours, at the play, she had been stuffing herself with all kinds of horrible things: peaches *au caramel*, *marrons glacés*, gooseberry *pâté*, dried cherries, and a lot of lemon into the bargain. Then, at supper, she ate a quantity of fish and drank proportionately."

presented comparatively little difficulty. For *Monseigneur*, though he was much attached to the lively Duc de Berry, had never cared for his eldest son, whose ascetic and studious life was a tacit reproach to his own sensual and aimless existence, and he was jealous of the high opinion which the King entertained of him and the exceptional favour enjoyed by his wife. If the task of poisoning his mind against the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne could be accomplished, it was certain that, in the event of his surviving the King, they would find themselves entirely without influence in the new reign.

Having satisfied herself that she could best gratify her malice, and, at the same time, serve her own interests, by joining the coterie who surrounded and dominated the Dauphin, the Duchesse de Berry lost no time in making advances to them. They were very favourably received, for it was felt that the wife of *Monseigneur's* favourite son would, in any case, be a useful auxiliary, and a most valuable one, if she could succeed in separating the Duc de Berry from the Bourgognes and persuading him to second her efforts to embitter his father's mind against them. And so, towards the end of 1710, the Court saw, not a little to its astonishment, the young princess who had frustrated the hopes of Mlle. de Bourbon on the most cordial terms with *Madame la Duchesse* and those who had striven to prevent her marriage, and a regular guest at the Meudon house-parties.

The Duchesse de Bourgogne, recognising the error she had committed in admitting to her friendship a girl who could so easily forget the obligations under which she had placed her, wisely decided to see as little of her as possible in the future, while, however, preserving her old relations

with the Duc de Berry, to whom she was sincerely attached. But, profiting by the influence she had succeeded in acquiring over her husband, the Duchesse de Berry laboured unceasingly to embroil him with his sister-in-law, or, at least, to put an end to all intimacy between them; and so far succeeded that the Duc de Berry's manner towards that princess altogether changed, and became distant and constrained. This unexpected coldness from one who had always shown her so much affection deeply distressed the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and, since there could be no doubt to whose influence it was attributable, she promptly broke with her sister-in-law, though without making any scandal.

At the end of the winter, the Household of the Duc and Duchesse de Berry was finally organised, and the two *ménages*, to their mutual relief, ceased to live together, which gave the courtiers an opportunity of showing on which side their sympathies lay. They did not hesitate, for the Duchesse de Bourgogne was not only the idol of the King, but " she had attached all hearts to her,"[1] and, while her apartments were crowded, those of her malicious sister-in-law were almost deserted. The latter, bitterly mortified, represented to her husband that this neglect was due to the machinations of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and persuaded the uxorious prince to resent what she designated as an unpardonable affront by breaking altogether with his brother's wife. Shortly afterwards, the unfortunate incident at Saint-Cloud was repeated, and this time the Duchesse de Bourgogne, now thoroughly exasperated, declined to join the conspiracy of silence and revealed everything to the King.

[1] Saint-Simon.

Louis XIV., anxious to preserve peace in his family, contented himself by causing the Duchesse de Berry to be informed that he knew all. But the young princess, misinterpreting the King's indulgence, showed not the slightest disposition to amend her ways; and, at length, her *dame d'honneur*, Madame de Saint-Simon, fearing a scandal, for which she herself might be held responsible, deemed it her duty to warn Madame de Maintenon. To her surprise, she found that that lady had already taken measures to keep herself informed of the course of events; and, strong in this support, Madame de Saint-Simon returned to her mistress and spoke to her very plainly indeed. The princess attempted to take a haughty tone with the duchess, but the latter cut short her flow of eloquence by asking to be relieved of her post, since, in the face of so many unpleasant incidents, she had no wish to retain it. Comprehending the gravity of the situation, the princess hastened to assure Madame de Saint-Simon of the esteem in which she held her and her desire to profit by her counsels, which, however, did not prevent the *dame d'honneur* from promptly acquainting both the Duchesse d'Orléans and *Madame* with what had passed.

On the morrow, before dinner, the Duchesse de Berry was summoned to the King's cabinet, where his Majesty expressed his opinion of her conduct in no measured terms, and gave her to understand that its continuance would entail consequences to herself of the most unpleasant kind. After dinner, she received orders from the King to go to the apartment of Madame de Maintenon, "who, without speaking so loudly, did not speak less firmly."[1] The erring princess listened humbly, feigned

[1] Saint-Simon.

repentance, and promised amendment, but with sentiments of the most bitter hatred against her sister-in-law, which the attitude of the courtiers, who, aware that she had fallen under the ban of the royal displeasure, ignored her more than ever, naturally did not tend to modify. "She consoled herself," says Saint-Simon, "by establishing still closer relations with the Meudon coterie, and by discounting in advance the revenge which she would take when the Dauphin should become King."

But, in the early spring of that same year, a tragic event occurred, which broke up the "Cabal of Meudon" and upset all the projects of the Duchesse de Berry.

With the exception of a short, but rather alarming illness in Lent 1701, occasioned by the consumption of an abnormal quantity of fish, *Monseigneur*, who was now in his fiftieth year, had since childhood enjoyed the most robust health, and nothing seemed more certain than that he would outlive the King, who had aged considerably of late, and upon whom the fatigues and anxieties of State were beginning to weigh very heavily. However, it was ordained otherwise.

On April 8—the Wednesday in Easter Week—*Monseigneur* left Versailles for Meudon, where he intended to pass some days. On the following morning, he rose early, with the intention of going wolf-hunting, but, while dressing, was seized with a sudden attack of faintness and fell back into a chair. Boudin, his chief physician, who was at once summoned, made him go to bed again, and, of course, caused the King to be informed. But, though his patient's temperature was alarmingly high, he expressed the opinion that there was no cause for uneasiness; and Louis XIV., concluding that the illness was

a slight one—perhaps another attack of indigestion—did not think it necessary to visit his son, and, in fact, spent the afternoon at Marly. The Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne, however, at once started for Meudon, and remained all day in the sick-room, "the princess joining to the strict duties of a daughter-in-law all that kindness could suggest and giving everything to *Monseigneur* with her own hands." In the evening, they returned to Versailles.

Next morning, the Dauphin was much worse, and it became evident that he was suffering from smallpox, and in a very severe form. Louis XIV., who had never had any fear of exposing himself to infection,[1] started for Meudon immediately after Mass, accompanied by Madame de Maintenon and a small suite, having previously forbidden the Ducs de Bourgogne and de Berry and their wives, and all persons who had not had smallpox, to follow him thither, with the exception of the Ministers, who received orders to come every morning. At Meudon, the King installed himself in a suite of rooms immediately above *Monseigneur*, whom he visited several times a day.

At Versailles, meanwhile, the most intense excitement prevailed; the apartments of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne could not contain the people who flocked thither, many of whom belonged to the Meudon faction, and had hitherto held aloof from the young couple, but, in view of the serious condition of *Monseigneur*, were now feverishly anxious to conciliate the prince who in a few hours' time might be Dauphin of France. "When the prince and princess rose, when they retired to bed, when

[1] Madame de Caylus tells us that when *Madame la Duchesse* was ill with smallpox, at Fontainebleau, in the autumn of 1684, the King insisted on visiting her, although her father-in-law, the Great Condé, strove by main force to prevent him entering the sick-room.

they dined and supped, all public conversation, all meals, all assemblies, were opportunities of paying court to them. The Duc and Duchesse de Berry were treated almost as nobodies. It was like the first glimmerings of the dawn."[1]

On the 13th, *Monseigneur* seemed better, but this improvement was of short duration. On the morrow, his illness suddenly took a turn for the worse; in the afternoon, he became unconscious; about seven o'clock, it was seen that he was slowly sinking, and before midnight he passed away, without recovering consciousness.

Saint-Simon, in an unforgettable picture, has described for us the scene at Versailles that April night when the news arrived that the heir to the throne was *in extremis*: the sudden throwing open of doors; the hurried rising and dressing of those who had retired to bed; the rush of ladies in their dressing-gowns to the apartments of the Duchesse de Bourgogne; the departure of the princess to meet the King at the Orangery, on his way from Meudon to Marly; her return with the news that all was over; the Duc de Bourgogne seated on a sofa, "weeping the tears of nature, religion, and patience"; the duchess sitting by his side and endeavouring to console him, "which was a less difficult task than that of appearing herself in need of consolation"; the apparition of *Madame* in full Court costume—she tells us herself that she never possessed a *robe de chambre*—among the ladies *en déshabillé*, "flooding them all with her tears and making the château resound with her cries";[2] the

[1] Saint-Simon.

[2] And, only the previous day, according to the chronicler, she had had a long conversation with him, in which she did not attempt to conceal her disappointment at the news that *Monseigneur's* illness had taken a favourable turn, and that he seemed likely to get over it.

varied emotions—hope, despair, rage, satisfaction—which revealed themselves on the faces of the courtiers; the groans and tears of *Monseigneur's* servants. But no part of that picture is more vivid than that in which he paints the despair of the Duc and Duchesse de Berry, skilfully discriminating between the grief which proceeds from genuine affection, and that which is the outcome of baffled spite and thwarted ambition:

"The Duc de Berry shed abundance of tears, but tears of blood, so to speak, so great appeared their bitterness; and he gave utterance not only to sobs, but to cries, nay, even to yells. Now and again he was silent, but from suffocation, and then would break out once more with such a noise, such a trumpet-sound of despair, that the majority of those present broke out also at these dolorous repetitions, either impelled by affliction or decorum. He became so bad, in fact, that his people were forced to undress him, put him to bed, and summon the doctor."

"The Duchess de Berry was beside herself, and we shall soon see why. The most bitter despair was depicted on her countenance. One saw, as it were, written there a rage of grief, based on interest, not on affection; at intervals came dry lulls deep and sullen, then a torrent of tears and involuntary gestures, and yet restrained, which revealed a profound bitterness of mind. Often aroused by the cries of her husband, prompt to assist him, to support him, to embrace him, her care for him was evident; but soon came another profound reverie, then another torrent of tears, which aided to suppress her cries."

The despair of the Duchesse de Berry can well be understood, for the position in which the sudden death

of *Monseigneur* had placed her was no unenviable one. The mischievous intrigues against the Duchesse de Bourgogne which she had carried on so assiduously, in the confident expectation that, in a few years, the accession of her father-in-law would enable her to gratify to the full both her malice and her ambition, had been an open secret at the Court ; and now *Monseigneur* was no more, and the princess against whom she had conspired had become the wife of the heir to the throne, before whom every one must bow down. The cabal with which she had associated herself no longer existed, and the more prudent of its former members were endeavouring to make their peace with the new Dauphin and Dauphine ; her father adored her, it is true, but since his intrigues in Spain he had been quite without influence at Court ; while she had deeply offended her mother by the rudeness with which she had repulsed that princess's sage counsels, when she had endeavoured to dissuade her from embarking in the campaign against the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and by the spiteful manner in which she lost no opportunity of reminding her of the disadvantages which attached to her illegitimate birth. Saint-Simon relates that, one morning when the Duchesse d'Orléans came to visit her daughter at her toilette, a new usher happened to be on duty. In admitting her, this official thoughtlessly threw open both of the folding-doors, an honour which was reserved for the King and the " sons and daughters of France." The Duchesse de Berry made no attempt to disguise her annoyance at the mistake, and gave her mother a very cold reception ; and no sooner had the latter departed, than she called Madame de Saint-Simon, and ordered her to discharge the maladroit

usher who had opened the door as for a "daughter of France," which the Duchesse d'Orléans, being legitimated, was not. Madame de Saint-Simon reasoned with the angry princess, who "insisted, wept and raged," but finally consented to allow her *dame d'honneur* merely to admonish the delinquent.

So the Duchesse de Berry found herself, through the death of *Monseigneur*, in a position of almost complete isolation, and might have been in a still more unpleasant one, if the princess whom she had treated with such ingratitude had not been too generous to trample on a fallen foe. Fortunately for her, both the new Dauphin and his wife, so far from wishing to humiliate her, had no thought but that of comforting the grief-stricken Duc de Berry and of re-establishing the intimacy which had previously existed between them; for, in the circumstances, it was impossible for the kind-hearted Dauphine to cherish any resentment against this weak but amiable prince, who had been as wax in the hands of his strong-willed consort. And, since the reconciliation with the Duc de Berry would be incomplete, if his wife were not included in it, the Dauphine decided to forget the past, the more readily since she appears to have regarded the machinations of her sister-in-law rather as the caprices of a spoiled child—such as she herself had been at the same age—than the carefully-matured plans of one who was already a woman in everything but years.

The Duc de Berry, who had never ceased to regret the interruption of the friendly relations between the two families, welcomed with delight the opportunity of their renewal; the duchess pretended to do likewise, and shed an abundance of tears, which may have been of relief at

her escape from a very precarious situation, but were certainly not of gratitude for the generosity extended to her. That generosity had, in fact, wounded her pride to the quick, for "she could not endure to be under obligations to any one";[1] and from that moment her hatred of her sister-in-law became more intense than ever.

And, though she had good reason for congratulation in having thus escaped the consequences of her treachery and ingratitude, she found it very difficult to resign herself to the changes which the death of *Monseigneur* had brought. During the lifetime of that prince, the Ducs de Bourgogne and de Berry had been on a footing of equality, and, when the latter married, the same honours had been accorded to his wife as to the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Now, however, that the elder brother had become heir-apparent to the Crown, Louis XIV. decided that the difference in their respective positions and that of their wives must be clearly defined, and directed that at the Dauphin's *lever* the Duc de Berry should hand him his shirt, and that at the Dauphine's toilette the Duchesse de Berry should hand her her chemise and the *sale*, a salver upon which their watches, rings, fans, and so forth were presented to the princesses.

The Duc de Berry raised no difficulty about this, but his wife was furious at being thus publicly placed in a position of inferiority to her sister-in-law, and vowed that nothing should induce her to undertake what she stigmatised as a menial service, and that, if her husband consented so to debase himself, she should hold him henceforth in the most supreme contempt. The Duc de Berry endeavoured to reason with her, and was treated to such

[1] Saint-Simon.

an avalanche of tears, threats, sobs, and reproaches that the poor prince, who had announced his intention of presenting himself on the following morning at the Dauphin's *lever*, did not dare to do so, from fear of an open rupture with his enraged consort. The Duc d'Orléans, however, came to his son-in-law's succour, and, after further unpleasant scenes, the duchess yielded to the threat of a new scolding from the King, though it was not until several days later that she condescended to attend the Dauphine's toilette and perform the services required of her. The Duchesse de Bourgogne, only too anxious to live at peace with her sister-in-law, prudently refrained from any remark upon the latter's absence on previous occasions, and "acknowledged her services with all the grace imaginable and all the most natural marks of affection."[1]

The Duchesse de Berry cherished another grievance against the Bourgognes, on the subject of the division of the late Dauphin's property.

With the exception of his two country-estates of Meudon and Chaville, both of which he had inherited from *la Grande Mademoiselle*, and a valuable collection of gems and curios, *Monseigneur* had left little behind him. The gems and curios, part of which, however, had to be sold to defray the deceased prince's debts, which were considerable, were divided between the King of Spain and the Duc de Berry; while the landed property fell to the share of the Duc de Bourgogne.

Now, since she and the Duc de Berry did not as yet possess any private residence of their own, the duchess had set her heart on her husband becoming the owner of

[1] Saint-Simon.

Meudon, where she saw herself reigning as a sort of queen ; and she gave him no rest until he had consented to do everything in his power to gratify her desire. The generous Dauphin would, it appears, have been quite willing to surrender Meudon to his brother ; but the King, who feared that it would entail the creation of a new Court, which would be extremely undesirable, both on the score of expense and for other reasons, refused to hear of it, and, by way of compensating his grandson for his disappointment, made him a present of some valuable diamonds, some of which no doubt found their way into the Duchesse de Berry's jewel-case. That princess, however, refused to be consoled, and, though the Bourgognes had been quite innocent of offence in the matter, she could not bring herself to forgive them their possession of Meudon.

The Bourgognes were not the only persons who had the misfortune to incur the resentment of the Duchesse de Berry about this time. The atrocious rumours concerning the relations between the Duc d'Orléans and his eldest daughter which had been current at the time of the latter's marriage had not ceased with that event, though during the alliance between the Duchesse de Berry and *Madame la Duchesse* little had been heard of them. Now, however, the younger princess had made her peace with the common enemy, and she and *Madame la Duchesse* had ceased to be allies, with the result that these abominable reports had revived, and become so persistent that they had even reached the Duc de Berry.

Let us at once observe that no serious historian has ever attached any importance to such an accusation. The affection which united father and daughter almost from the latter's infancy had a very touching and a very

natural foundation; and the unfortunate similitude of tastes and character which existed between them—their inordinate love of good cheer, their fondness for dissolute company, their utter lack of moral sense—bound them closer together. However, the public does not reason, and easily allows itself to be made the dupe of slanders disseminated by those in high places; and already, thanks to the malignity of *Madame la Duchesse* and her friends, the fact that the Duc d'Orléans happened to be just then more assiduous than ever in his attentions to his beloved daughter, and in the habit of spending several hours every day in her company, was beginning to cause tongues to wag very busily. If, however, their owners had but paused for reflection, they would have remembered that, since the Duchesse de Berry was now enceinte and condemned to an enforced indolence very galling to one of her restless nature and active habits, not only the chase and all outdoor amusements, but even the card-table, being forbidden by her physicians, it was the most natural thing in the world for her father to desire to console her ennui.

The Duc de Berry was greatly distressed by these abominable rumours, without, however, believing them. At the same time, he could not help remarking the length and frequency of the visits paid by the Duc d'Orléans to his wife, and complained of the impossibility of enjoying even an hour of her society without the risk of being interrupted by the arrival of her too-affectionate father. His complaints reached the ears of Saint-Simon, who had already observed, he tells us, the ill-concealed impatience which the continual presence of the Duc d'Orléans in the young princess's apartments was regarded by her

husband, and had endeavoured, though without success, to prevail upon his friend to moderate his paternal assiduity. He now believed it to be his duty to return to the charge much more energetically, and to acquaint the Duc d'Orléans with the reports that were current, "in order to prevent a quarrel between son-in-law and father-in-law, based upon so false and so odious a foundation."

"M. d'Orléans was astonished," he writes; "he cried out against the horror of so abominable an imputation and the villainy that had carried it to the Duc de Berry. He thanked me for having warned him of it, a service which few besides myself would have rendered him; and I left him to draw the proper and natural conclusion as to the line of conduct it behoved him to pursue."

Saint-Simon, of course, never for a moment imagined that the Duc d'Orléans would say anything of what had passed between them; but that prince was quite incapable of keeping a secret from his daughter, and lost no time in relating to her the whole conversation. The same evening, after supper, the duchess summoned Madame de Saint-Simon into her wardrobe, and, "with a cold and angry air," expressed her astonishment that her husband should be endeavouring to stir up a quarrel between the Duc d'Orléans and herself. The *dame d'honneur* assured her that she must have been misinformed; but the princess rejoined that it was only too true, and thereupon repeated every word that Saint-Simon had said to her father. Madame de Saint-Simon, though much surprised, did not lose the calm and dignified manner which she invariably assumed towards her wayward mistress. She replied with firmness that this horrible report was public; that her Royal Highness could herself perceive what

disastrous consequences would follow, false and abominable as it might be, and appreciate the importance of the Duc d'Orléans being at once informed of it. She added that her husband had given so many proofs of his attachment for both the duke and herself that his motives were above suspicion. With which she curtsied and retired, leaving the princess to her own reflections.

Saint-Simon was so angry at this gross breach of confidence on the part of the Duc d'Orléans that for a while he ceased to visit both him and the Duchesse de Berry, though they " cajoled him with all kinds of excuses and apologies." Eventually, however, they were reconciled, and he and the duke became as firm friends as ever, though on the understanding that there should be no question of the Duchesse de Berry between them. Indeed, from that time forth, he tells us, he kept aloof from the princess as much as possible and only visited her for form's sake.

On July 21, 1711, at Fontainebleau, the Duchesse de Berry gave birth prematurely to a daughter, who only lived two days. For this *contretemps* the senile tyranny of Louis XIV. was indirectly responsible, as it had been for the miscarriage of the Duchesse de Bourgogne at Marly, three years before. Although the doctors had warned the King that it would be imprudent for the princess to travel to Fontainebleau, and the Duc de Berry, Madame de Maintenon, and *Madame* had begged him to allow her to remain behind, he insisted on her following the Court; and the only concession that they were able to obtain was permission for her to make the journey by water.

Singularly enough, while insisting on the unfortunate Duchesse de Berry taking a serious and wholly unneces-

sary risk merely to gratify his desire to have all his relatives in attendance upon him, his Majesty issued the most stringent orders as to the precautions which she was to observe in Paris, while waiting for the barges required for the conveyance of herself and her suite to be made ready, and forbade her to quit the Palais-Royal, even to visit the Opera, where her box was on the same floor as her apartments.

On July 15, the duchess embarked, in company with her father, and proceeded as far as Petit-Bourg, where the King was to pass the night. The journey, notwithstanding all the precautions taken, had tried her very much, and she arrived feeling exceedingly unwell. On the morrow, as her barge was passing under the bridge of Melun, it collided with one of the piers, and was very nearly swamped, much to the alarm of the duchess, who was compelled to make the remainder of the journey to Fontainebleau by road. She arrived in the middle of the night, utterly worn out, with the result which might have been anticipated. "As it was only a daughter," says Saint-Simon, "they consoled themselves, and the Duc de Berry set them the example, for while the remains of his child were being carried to Saint-Denis, he was hunting with the Dauphin."

The Duchesse de Berry made a rapid recovery, and towards the end of August was permitted to follow the chase in an elegant little *calèche* which she had just had made for her; while on September 7 she was able to mount her horse once more. For a few weeks the life of the young lady appears to have been relatively tranquil, but soon it became stormy again.

This time the cause of the trouble was the princess's

behaviour towards her mother, who was now beginning to realise that not even a great princess can afford to neglect her duty towards her children without some day being called upon to suffer for it. In default of more maternal sentiments, the Duchesse d'Orléans had always shown her eldest daughter much kindness and indulgence, which the latter repaid by treating her with the most mortifying coldness and hauteur, and allowing, as we have seen, no opportunity to slip of reminding her of the unfortunate circumstances of her birth. At length, she began to testify her antipathy in so marked a manner as to earn several sharp reprimands from the King, but these, so far from causing any improvement in her conduct, seemed only to make her the more insolent and spiteful; and Louis XIV. accordingly charged *Madame* to take her granddaughter in hand and endeavour to bring her to her senses. The old princess, who never shrank from reprimanding the young for their follies, and with whom the Duchesse de Berry was no favourite, readily accepted the commission, stipulating only that the King should warn the princess of the order that he had given. This request having been complied with, she sent for the Duchesse de Berry and her parents, and proceeded to give her a piece of her mind.

The delinquent "shed warm tears and promised repeatedly to reform"; and, as *Madame*, by the King's desire, continued to bestow upon her periodical admonitions, for a while there appears to have been some slight improvement. "The pupil whom they have entrusted to my care," writes the old princess, under date November 15, 1711, "conducts herself better now, thanks be to God, and profits by my lectures. God grant that it may last!"

But it is evident that there was still ample room for amendment, since *Madame* tells us, in the same letter, that she had had occasion to reprimand her granddaughter for " drinking too much, for making wry faces at the King, for ill-using her husband, for living on bad terms with the Dauphine, for attacking every one to their faces, for being discourteous, and for other like things."

Madame continued to lecture the Duchesse de Berry for some three months, but, though the latter appeared to receive the grandmaternal admonitions in a duly contrite spirit, and for a few days behaved as though she was sincere in her professions of penitence, they in reality produced not the smallest effect upon her, and her conduct, particularly towards her mother, soon became as reprehensible as ever. Nor was this at all surprising, since she had lately bestowed her confidence upon one of her waiting-women, a certain Mlle. de Vienne, a bold and unprincipled young woman, whose mother had been nurse to Philippe d'Orléans, and who had perhaps not escaped the favours of that prince. This Mlle. de Vienne would seem to have cherished a grudge against the Duchesse d'Orléans; any way, she laboured to set the duke at variance with his wife, and the Duchesse de Berry with her mother, and was only too successful. Finally, at the beginning of January 1712, these family dissensions occasioned a regular scandal, which showed *Madame* that she might just as well have spared her breath for all the good her long-winded reprimands had done her wilful granddaughter.

The Duc d'Orléans happened to possess a very beautiful diamond necklace, which had been given to his father by Anne of Austria, and with which the Duchesse d'Orléans

loved to adorn herself. With the twofold object of gratifying her vanity and annoying her mother, the Duchesse de Berry conceived the idea of getting temporary possession of this resplendent bauble and wearing it at a grand ball which was to be given by the Chancellor, Pontchartrain. Although sure of meeting with a refusal, she applied to her mother, in whose jewel-case it reposed, for the loan of it, and when she received the answer anticipated, retorted insolently that the necklace belonged to her father and that she could easily persuade him to give it her. In point of fact, Philippe d'Orléans had the incredible weakness to surrender to his daughter's caprice; and the Duchesse de Berry wore the coveted diamonds at the Pontchartrain ball and at other New Year festivities.

But her triumph was of very brief duration, for the Duchesse d'Orléans complained bitterly of her daughter's insufferable insolence, and found, on this occasion, a firm support in *Madame*, who repaired to the King's cabinet, and acquainted his Majesty with what had occurred. "Those who saw her come out," writes Dangeau, "say that she had tears in her eyes, but that they do not concern her, and that it is a question of some difference between the Duchesse de Berry and the Duchesse d'Orléans, her mother. What confirms people in this opinion, is that the two have been seen together at Mass in the *loge* of the tribune, and that they did not seem pleased with one another, and that in the evening the Duchesse d'Orléans was observed to enter Madame de Maintenon's apartment, where the King was, and where she remained rather a long time."[1]

[1] *Journal*, January 7, 1712.

The King, we are told, was exceedingly annoyed and spoke of adopting very severe measures to bring his granddaughter to reason. The latter, who had developed a diplomatic chill and betaken herself to bed, recognising that this time she had gone altogether too far, became decidedly alarmed, and suffered herself to be persuaded by the Dauphine, though not until after several long discussions, to apologise to her indignant mother. On the morrow, accordingly, she repaired, in an apparently very chastened mood, to the apartments of the Duchesse d'Orléans, where a formal reconciliation took place between mother and daughter. "The Duchesse de Berry," continues Dangeau, "spoke to her [the Duchesse d'Orléans] with much affection and deference, praying her very earnestly to give her all her counsels, as though she were still her daughter, and asserting that it had always been her intention to do well and that she would do still better in the future; and that, if she had committed any wrong, she must pardon a person of her age. The Duchesse d'Orléans embraced her very tenderly, and promised to set her right with the King."

The King, however, was not so easily placated as the Duchesse d'Orléans, and insisted on the instant dismissal of Mlle. de Vienne, to whose pernicious counsels this unseemly family quarrel was generally attributed. Nor would he allow the offender to present herself before him, until *Madame* had interceded for her, and represented that the dismissal of the waiting-woman, to whom his granddaughter was greatly attached, was a sufficient punishment.

The Duchesse de Berry was therefore permitted to resume her place at the King's supper-table, but she was

quite unable to conceal her resentment at the disgrace of her favourite, and though her mother, to appease her, surrendered the diamond necklace, the immediate cause of all the trouble, she continued in a most unamiable humour. For not only had the enforced separation from Mlle. de Vienne wounded her both in her pride and her affections, but she had found that the scandal which she had so wantonly provoked, and the manner in which the King had manifested his displeasure, had sadly diminished her prestige at the Court, and that people were no longer disposed to treat her with the deference she considered her due. Thus, having on the death of her first equerry, the Marquis de Razilly, had the imprudence to promise the vacant post both to the Chevalier de la Rochefoucauld-Roye and the Marquis de Lévis, she had the still greater imprudence to pass them both over and confer it upon a third candidate, the Comte de Sainte-Maure. The chevalier and the marquis were naturally exceedingly indignant at such treatment, and their respective wives still more so ; indeed, the latter went so far as to express their dissatisfaction to the princess in most disrespectful terms. The Duchesse de Berry was furious ; but, since she was well aware that neither the King nor Madame de Maintenon would pay any attention to her complaints, she was compelled to stomach their insolence as best she might, although Madame de Lévis, who was a daughter of the Duc de Chevreuse, emboldened by impunity, ended by even daring to make faces at her.

However, shortly afterwards, Death again intervened to change the situation of the princess, this time altogether to her advantage.

CHAPTER IV

Successive deaths of the Dauphine, the Dauphin, and the little Duc de Bretagne—Joy of the Duchesse de Berry—Altered situation of the princess, who, by the death of her sister-in-law, becomes the first lady of the Court—Lively passage-at-arms between her and *Madame*—She becomes pregnant: rigorous precautions insisted upon by the King—Cruel disappointment which she inflicts upon the old Maréchal de Bezons—She gives birth to a son, who, however, does not long survive—She gains the favour of the King, and her position becomes a very enviable one—Her relations with her husband—Intrigue between the Duc de Berry and one of his wife's waiting-women—Compact between the prince and princess, which leaves them both free to follow their own inclinations—Violent passion of the Duchesse de Berry for her husband's first equerry, La Haye—She endeavours to persuade him to carry her off to the Netherlands—Accident to the Duc de Berry—His illness and death—Exaggerated grief affected by his widow—Birth of a posthumous daughter—Indulgence of Louis XIV. for the duchess during the last months of his life.

THE autumn of 1711 had been very wet, and was followed by a severe winter. A malignant type of measles—called by the Faculty, "*rougeole pourpre*"—broke out in Paris and at Versailles, and claimed many victims. On the evening of February 5, 1712, a few days after the return of the Court from a visit to Marly, the Dauphine, who had of late been suffering much from toothache and rheumatism, and had, besides, severely taxed her strength and rendered herself particularly liable to infection by refusing to take the precautions her state of health required, was taken ill. Her malady soon developed symptoms which completely puzzled the physicians who attended her; in spite of all their efforts, she grew steadily worse, and on February 12 she died, at the early age of twenty-six.[1] "With her," says

[1] For a full account of the death of the Dauphine and of her husband, see the author's *A Rose of Savoy* (London, Methuen; New York, Scribners, 1909).

Saint-Simon, "departed joy, pleasure, and everything gracious; and darkness brooded over the Court. She had been its life, and, if it survived her, it was only to languish. Never was princess so regretted; never was one more worthy of regret."

The grief of the Court was not shared by the Duchesse de Berry. In losing her sister-in-law, she had lost the only person at the Court who entertained for her a sincere friendship and was always ready to make allowance for her faults; but, so far from appreciating the rare qualities of this good and amiable princess, she was unable to dissimulate her joy at seeing herself delivered from "one greater and more beloved than herself,"[1] and at becoming, in her stead, the first lady in the land. Nor was her satisfaction lessened when the Dauphin (February 18) and his eldest son, the little Duc de Bretagne (March 8), followed the Dauphine to the grave, leaving only the aged King and the infant Duc d'Anjou between the Duc de Berry and the Crown of France.

As the first lady in the kingdom, and likely to remain so for many a long year to come, it was no longer possible for the Duchesse de Berry to be kept in the kind of semi-disgrace to which she had been relegated for some time past. Louis XIV. had perforce to treat her more graciously, though he charged *Madame* to continue her admonitions; and the Court naturally followed suit. She now held a *cercle* of her own, newcomers to the Court were presented to her, and the Ambassadors received in public audience; she presided with her husband at the gaming-tables in the salon; and the King felt it necessary to excuse himself from inviting her to ride

[1] Saint-Simon.

ELIZABETH CHARLOTTE OF BAVARIA, DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS
("MADAME")

From the painting by Hyacinthe Rigaud, at Versailles

(Photo by W. A. Mansell & Co.)

in his *calèche*, on the ground that they were both a little too stout for so small a carriage to hold them comfortably.

All this was, of course, very gratifying to the vanity of the princess, and, for a while, she appears to have become quite amiable, even going the length of giving a supper-party in her mother's honour one evening at Fontainebleau. But this improvement does not appear to have lasted very long, for at the beginning of the following October, *Madame*, after a particularly lively passage of arms with the young lady, pronounces her to be "more foolish and more impertinent than ever."

"Yesterday," her grandmother continues, "she tried to snub me, but I gave her a piece of my mind. She came to me, sumptuously adorned, in full Court toilette, with fourteen *poinçons* of the most beautiful diamonds imaginable. She looked well enough, except that she had put twelve patches on her face, which were horribly unsuited to her. When she came before me, I said to her: 'Madame, you look splendid, but it seems to me that you have too many patches, and they do not give you a very distinguished air. You are the first lady in this land, and your position requires rather more gravity than to wear patches like an actress on the stage.' She made a wry face and said: 'I know you don't care for patches and that they displease you, but I like them, and I intend to please nobody but myself.' 'That is an error,' I said to her, 'which is due to your extreme youth, for, rather than please yourself, you ought to think of pleasing the King.' 'Oh!' said she, 'the King gets accustomed to anything; and, as for me, I have made up my mind not to bother myself about anything, and not to care about anything.' I laughed and said: 'With

such sentiments one can go far. Listen. When I tell you my opinion, I do so for your own good, because I am obliged to as your grandmother, and because the King has ordered me. Otherwise, I should not say a word. To be silent is to be on the right side.' 'Yes,' said she, 'for speech won't do any good; and won't prevent me from doing as I please.' 'So much the worse for you,' said I, 'but as all that I hear you say proceeds from the errors of youth, I hope you will change.' 'I am quite satisfied, and I don't intend to change.' 'It is not enough,' said I, 'to be satisfied with yourself; it is necessary that every one should be satisfied with you.' Thereupon she got up. 'There is a little head,' said I, 'which will give you a lot of trouble.' 'What do you mean by that?' she asked. 'You understand what I mean,' I replied; 'and that's enough; but, even if you don't, experience will soon enlighten you.' With that lesson she took her departure. You see with what a mad creature we have to deal. In the evening, I related all that had passed to her father, adding that he must make his daughter clearly understand in what manner she ought to speak to me; that I had been patient this time, but that I could not be sure of being always so, and that I might well complain to the King of the way in which she had received my admonitions. My son was frightened; he begged me to say nothing, and promised to reprimand her sharply."

We can imagine how much effect a reprimand from her doting father would be likely to have upon the Duchesse de Berry, who, Saint-Simon tells us, was in the habit of "treating him like a negro," when she happened to be in one of her tantrums. Moreover, as she was now again

in an interesting condition, the Duc d'Orléans no doubt considered that it would be imprudent to do anything to agitate her, so that, if the promised reproof were administered at all, it must have been of the mildest possible kind.

The successive deaths of the Duc de Bourgogne and the little Duc de Bretagne had invested the pregnancy of the Duchesse de Berry with an importance which it would not otherwise have possessed; and Louis XIV., who ardently desired to see the succession to the throne in the direct line secured against all possibility of failure, insisted that the most rigorous precautions should be taken to guard against a repetition of the accident of the previous year. So on Christmas Day—that is to say, three months before the princess expected her confinement—she was, greatly to her disgust, ordered to bed, and condemned to pass there the remainder of the time.

Everything possible was done, however, to relieve the monotony of this captivity. The King came to see her every day; the Duc de Berry spent all his evenings with her; card-parties took place every night in her bedchamber, though they had orders to terminate punctually at half-past nine; and on one occasion, as an unusual indulgence, she was permitted to entertain her friends to a *médianoche*,[1] at which a performance of marionettes was given.

The selection of the ladies who were to superintend the education of the eagerly-expected child also provided the princess with some occupation; and, incidentally, with the opportunity of inflicting a cruel disappointment on one of the most worthy men at the Court.

[1] A *médianoche* was a meat-supper which took place after midnight on fast-days.

The Maréchal de Bezons, a gallant old soldier, who had served his King and country with distinction in every quarter of Europe, solicited the post of *gouvernante* to the future prince or princess for his wife. The marshal was far advanced in years and possessed but a scanty fortune, and was therefore extremely anxious to assure his wife's future by securing for her so lucrative a charge. The Duchesse de Berry, whose pride was gratified by the prospect of having for her child's *gouvernante* the wife of so distinguished a soldier, received his request most graciously and hastened to accede to it ; and the marshal withdrew, satisfied that nothing remained but to obtain the consent of the King. But, almost at the same moment, she received an application for the post from one of her most intimate friends, the Marquis d'Antin, and her *chevalier d'honneur*, the Comte de Sainte-Maure, on behalf of the Marquise de Pompadour, a vain old woman, who was intoxicated with the desire to occupy at the Court an important position ; and, coolly ignoring the promise she had just given the marshal, acceded to this also.

Poor Bezons, without seeing the princess again, went to obtain the King's consent ; but Madame de Pompadour had anticipated him, and his Majesty, while assuring him of how willingly he would have accorded it, told him that he had already conferred the post upon that lady. The old marshal, exasperated at the way he had been treated, sought out the Duchesse de Berry and expressed his opinion of her conduct with as much candour as Mesdames de Lévis and de la Roye had employed, in similar circumstances, some months before ; but it is to be feared that the princess was already too insensible to shame to feel any remorse.

About ten o'clock on the evening of March 25, 1713, while playing cards with some of her friends, the Duchesse de Berry felt the first pains of labour, and at four o'clock on the following morning, to the great joy of the King and her husband, she gave birth to a son, who received the title of Duc d'Alençon. But their joy was soon turned to mourning, for the little prince was so small and feeble that from the first it was feared that he would not live; and in the night of April 9–10, after several attacks of convulsions, he expired.

To the credit of the Duchesse de Berry, it must be recorded that she showed a real tenderness for her little son, and two days before his death, when he was reported to be in a desperate state, she insisted on leaving her bed to go to him; and the intervention of Louis XIV. was necessary to prevent this visit from being repeated.

On the 17th, the body of the poor little prince was conveyed to Saint-Denis, by the Bishop of Sens, the bishop of the diocese, and Mesdames de Pompadour and de Vaudreuil, his *gouvernante* and *sous-gouvernante*.[1] His heart was taken to the Val-de-Grâce.

The recovery of the duchess was again a very rapid one, and by the beginning of June she had resumed her ordinary life, and was following the chase—her favourite diversion—with as much ardour as ever. Her position was now a distinctly enviable one, for Louis XIV., anxious to console her for her recent bereavement and for the three months' captivity which had preceded it, and to which, he hoped, it might soon be necessary for

[1] The Duchesse de Berry gave Madame de Pompadour a pension of 12,000 livres, and continued their salaries to all the servants chosen for her son. Whatever were her faults, she was generous enough in money matters.

her to submit again, treated her with almost as much kindness and indulgence as he had shown the Duchesse de Bourgogne. On the occasion of the double betrothal of the Duc de Bourbon to Mlle. de Conti and of the Prince de Conti to Mlle. de Bourbon, she appeared covered with all the Crown jewels, which the King had lent her, and which Dangeau declares to have been worth at this period more than eighteen million livres ;[1] she was given a suite of apartments for her own at Fontainebleau ; she sat by the King's side at the play ; and her *calèche*—a costly equipage gilded all over and with gold-mounted harness—followed his Majesty's closely in the chase.

Nor was the Court oblivious to the fact that not only was she actually the first lady in the land, Madame de Maintenon not taking officially any rank, and high in favour with the King, but that only the life of a frail child intervened between her husband and the succession to the throne ; and those who had once almost ignored her were now the most assiduous in their homage.

By the end of the year, the Duchesse de Berry, though she could never hope to fill the place which the late Dauphine had occupied in the affections of those around her, enjoyed in other respects very much the same position. Her salon had become the centre of the Court ; she wore the most extravagant toilettes, " her coiffure so filled with jewels that one could say without exaggeration that the eye was unable to endure their dazzling splendour " ;[2] she gave the most sumptuous entertainments ; she went to the Fair of Saint-Laurent, threw money to the people in the streets, finished up with a

[1] *Journal*, July 8, 1713.
[2] *Mercure*, October 1713, cited by Barthélemy.

supper at the Opera, to which she entertained a number of ladies, and returned to Marly, where the King then was, at five o'clock in the morning. And Louis XIV. uttered no word of protest and permitted her to do exactly as she pleased. It seemed, indeed, that she had not miscalculated when she had flippantly assured her indignant grandmother that the King "got accustomed to anything," and that she had "made up her mind to trouble herself about nothing."

But, if the Duchesse de Berry had gained the favour of the King and the homage of the Court, she had lost the affection of her husband, though this, so far from occasioning her Royal Highness any regret, was regarded by her with distinct relief.

The Duc de Berry, as we have seen, had begun by falling very much in love with his wife and allowing himself to be entirely dominated by her superior intelligence and strength of will; and for the first two years of their married life he submitted meekly to the yoke, and continued to adore her, notwithstanding her violent temper, her fantastic caprices, and her increasing indifference to himself. "The Duc de Berry," writes *Madame*, under date May 21, 1712, "is very enamoured of his wife, who is unhappily not enamoured of him, and, although she behaves better than she used to, I fear that she will become coquettish. She has a strong propensity in that direction."

But even the patience of the most long-suffering and uxorious husband has its limits, and the Duc de Berry would assuredly have been something more than human if his wife had not succeeded in exhausting it. In every conceivable way she provoked and disgusted him. She ridiculed his piety, or rather his respect for religion, and

made his strict observance of Lent and fast-days the subject of such biting jests that sometimes, to escape them, he would do violence to his conscience and partake of what the Church had forbidden. She interfered perpetually with the management of his Household, and forced him to dismiss persons whose services he valued, but against whom she happened to have some fancied grievance. "She partook of few meals in private at which she did not become so intoxicated as to lose consciousness, and the presence of the Duc de Berry, of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans, and of ladies with whom she was not on familiar terms, in no way restrained her. She even complained of the Duc de Berry for not doing as she did."[1] Her temper, always violent, had become so volcanic that neither he nor her parents, "dared hazard the least contradiction, much less the least admonition,"[2] from fear of provoking some distressing scene. And, finally, although the atrocious rumours concerning her relations with the Duc d'Orléans, skilfully fostered by *Madame la Duchesse* and her friends, had become more persistent than ever and threatened to cause a terrible scandal, she stubbornly refused to take the only means of putting a stop to them, and the few hours she could spare from the chase, the toilette, and the gambling-table, which absorbed the greater part of her time, were given to her father.

At length, her conduct became so intolerable that the poor man could endure it no longer. In one of his moments of vexation, he had "forgotten himself" with a waiting-woman of his wife, whom *Madame* describes as "swarthy and ugly," but who, nevertheless, pos-

[1] Saint-Simon. [2] *Ibid.*

sessed sufficient attractions to inspire in him a serious attachment. The Duchesse de Berry was not long in discovering what was in progress, but, instead of flying into one of her passions, she perceived in it a means of disembarrassing herself of a husband whose affection only wearied her and of securing the most complete liberty. She accordingly bided her time, and presently detected the duke and the *femme de chambre* in a situation which rendered denial impossible. Then, without making any scene, she coolly proposed to her erring consort that henceforth, while living together, as they had at first, on amicable terms, he should go his own way and allow her to do the same, promising to behave as though she had not the least suspicion of his infidelity. If he did not agree to this, she threatened to complain to the King and to demand that his inamorata should be banished so far from the Court that "never for the rest of his life would he see her or hear her voice again."[1]

The Duc de Berry accepted his wife's proposition, and from that time, with the exception of an occasion of which we shall presently speak, left her to follow her own inclinations; while he continued to solace his leisure with her waiting-woman, whom he married early in 1713, with a handsome dowry, but on the condition that her husband should have no conjugal relations with her. "He died loving her," writes *Madame*, "and left her, like his wife, in an interesting condition. Madame de Berry, who was not in the least jealous, took care of both mother and child."

Thus delivered from all possibility of surveillance on

[1] *Lettres inédites de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Rolland), Letter of March 31, 1717.

the part of her husband, the Duchesse de Berry proceeded to indulge to the full that propensity for flirtation which *Madame* had already remarked in her. From flirtation she soon passed to a more serious kind of gallantry, and, after an intrigue with a M. de Salvert, an official of the Grande Écurie, she fixed her affections on La Haye, first equerry to the duke, whom Saint-Simon describes as "tall, well-made, and a good horseman," but with "a sunburned face, which, besides, had never been handsome, a foppish and foolish manner, and little intelligence." Of this personage, for whom she purchased the office of first chamberlain to her husband, which entitled him to a place in the duke's carriage and at his table, the princess became most desperately enamoured; and "the oglings in the salon at Marly were perceived by every one who happened to be there, since nothing restrained them."[1] Finally, so violent became her passion that she actually conceived the project of making him carry her off to the Netherlands.

"La Haye was like to die with fright at this proposition, which she herself made him, and she of the fury into which his objections threw her. From the most pressing entreaties she passed to all the invectives that rage could suggest, and which torrents of tears could allow her to pronounce. La Haye had to suffer her attacks—now tender, now furious. He was in the most mortal embarrassment."[2]

Despite the resistance of her lover, the princess clung to this mad idea for a long time, and tormented the unhappy equerry to such a degree with her tears, entreaties, reproaches and threats that he began most heartily to

[1] Saint-Simon. [2] *Ibid.*

regret his so-called *bonne fortune*, and would fain have hidden himself from her, had he not feared that, in her rage at his disappearance, she would provoke a scandal which would render his return to Court for ever impossible. At length, either because she had recovered her senses, or in despair of overcoming his reluctance, she ceased to persecute him. But the *liaison* continued until the death of the Duc de Berry and for some time afterwards.

The loss of her husband's affection had troubled the Duchesse de Berry not at all; but the loss of the poor man himself, which soon followed, was quite another matter, since it deprived her of the possibility, at this time far from a remote one, of ever becoming Queen of France.

The almost incredible imprudence of the Duc de Berry was the cause of his death. On Thursday, April 26, the Court being then at Marly, he went hunting with the King and the Elector of Bavaria. Recent rain had rendered the ground very treacherous, and, in the course of the chase, his horse slipped and nearly came down. He pulled him up sharply, and, as the animal recovered his feet, "the pommel of the saddle struck the Duc de Berry between the chest and the stomach."

"He felt at once a sharp pain," contiuues *Madame*, "but he said nothing. The same evening, he spat blood, and forbade his *valet de chambre* to speak of it. He thought he had dysentery, and did not wish to say anything, from fear of being made to swallow a heap of remedies. He hoped that it would pass away. Friday, he began to feel unwell, but he said that it was only a slight indisposition. Saturday, he went to the chase. The same day, a peasant, who had witnessed the blow which the prince had re-

ceived, inquired of one of the King's gentlemen : ' How is the Duc de Berry ? ' ' Very well,' replied the other, ' for he has gone wolf-hunting to-day.' ' If he is well then,' said the peasant, ' princes must have stronger bones than we peasants, since I saw him receive a blow during the chase on Thursday that would have split open three of us.' "[1]

On the following Monday morning (April 30), though feeling far from well, the Duc de Berry rose at an early hour to attend the King's *lever*, after which he intended to go stag-hunting ; but, on leaving the royal chamber, he was seized with a violent fit of shivering, which obliged him to retire to bed. He was soon in a high fever, and though in the evening he was bled in the foot, this afforded him no relief, and he passed a very bad night. At seven o'clock the next morning, he was again bled, but the fever continued to increase; and when, after Mass, Louis XIV. came to see his grandson, the doctors, contrary to their usual custom in the case of royal patients, made no attempt to disguise their uneasiness.

It should be remarked that the Duc de Berry had as yet said not a word about the accident of the previous Thursday ; and when, later in the day, the doctors proposed to administer emetics, he offered no objection to taking them. These must undoubtedly have destroyed any chance of ultimate recovery which the unfortunate prince might have possessed.

The Duc de Berry again passed a very restless night, and in the morning was bled for the third time. Early

[1] Letter of May 6, 1714, *Lettres inédites de la Princesse Palatine* (edit. Rolland). We have transcribed these details, since Saint-Simon tells us that the death of the Duc de Berry gave rise to the most sinister suspicions, which he himself appears to have shared.

in the forenoon, the duchess, who was once more in an interesting condition and had been obliged to remain at Versailles, sent her *chevalier d'honneur*, Coëtenfao, to beg the King to allow Chirac, the favourite physician of the Duc d'Orléans, to come to Marly.[1] But Louis XIV. refused, observing that all the doctors in attendance on the prince were of the same opinion, and that a newcomer, who might differ from them, would only create embarrassment. After dinner, the princess sent Mesdames de Pompadour and de la Vieuville, "to demand his Majesty's permission for her to come herself to Marly," since she was unable to endure the anxiety she was suffering, and would come on foot rather than not come at all." The King replied that, if the Duchesse de Berry arrived, he would not close the door against her, but that it would be very imprudent for her to come. And he charged the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans to go to Versailles and persuade their daughter to renounce her project. This they did, and, "after the review [of the Gardes du Corps], while the King was changing his dress, the Duc d'Orléans came to tell him that the Duchesse de Berry had finally surrendered to his en-

[1] *Madame* relates an amusing anecdote of this personage, who, during the Mississippi "boom" some years later, contracted the speculative fever in a rather virulent form: "Dr. Chirac was summoned to the bedside of a sick lady. Whilst he was with her, some one remarked that the shares [of Law's bank] were going down. The doctor, who held a great many shares, was so much disturbed that, even when feeling his patient's pulse, he kept muttering to himself: 'Going down, down, down!' Hearing this, the sick woman began weeping and lamenting: 'Alas!' said she, 'I am surely dying. M. Chirac, when feeling my pulse, whispered, "Going down, down, down!"' The doctor, aroused from his reverie, looked up, on hearing this, and said, 'You are dreaming; your pulse is regular, and you will soon be quite well. I was thinking of the Mississippi shares, which are going down in price.' Thus, he reassured the sick lady."

treaties and his counsels, and that she would not come. The King again charged M. d'Orléans to go to Versailles, to sustain her in this prudent resolution."[1]

The truth is that the Duc de Berry did not wish to see his wife, and, according to Saint-Simon, during his last illness, " he never once mentioned her name, or spoke of her, even indirectly." Notwithstanding the compact between them of which we have spoken, fresh quarrels had arisen, owing perhaps to the almost public manner in which the duchess had proclaimed her infatuation for La Haye, but, more probably, to the duke's disgust at the rumours which the maladroit attentions of his father-in-law were provoking. Any way, there had recently been a most violent scene at Rambouillet, in which the duchess " received a kick . . . and the threat that she should be shut up in a convent for the rest of her life ; and when the Duc de Berry fell ill, he was thumbing his hat, like a child, before the King, relating all his grievances, and asking him to deliver him from the Duchesse de Berry."[2]

The night of May 2–3 was even worse than those which had preceded it, and, in the morning, although the Duc de Berry still remained silent about his accident, the doctors were unanimously of opinion that he had ruptured a vein in the stomach.[3] The nausea, which had been a marked feature of his illness from the first, and had given rise to the suspicions of which Saint-Simon speaks, ceased about nine o'clock ; but the patient was no better ; and the King, who had intended to hunt that day, countermanded his carriage.

[1] Dangeau, *Journal*, May 2, 1714. [2] Saint-Simon.

[3] Saint-Simon. But Dangeau says that the Faculty had arrived at this conclusion on the morning of the 2nd.

Towards evening, the prince was moved from his bed into an arm-chair, as he was unable to breathe in a recumbent position. This appears to have relieved him greatly, and when, shortly after eight o'clock, *Madame* and the Duchesse d'Orléans visited the sick-room, they found him quite cheerful and convinced that the worst was over. "He believed," writes the elder princess, "that he was out of danger, and said to me, with a laugh: 'For the present, Madame, I think I may tell you that I am saved; I have no more fever and no longer feel ill.' Then he called out in a loud voice: 'Give a chair to *Madame* and a seat to Madame d'Orléans, and let us talk.' 'Certainly not,' I replied, 'talking might bring back the fever: do not talk so much.' While still chatting, he was seized with a violent attack of hiccoughs, and he spoke with difficulty, since he was scarcely able to breathe. Madame d'Orléans, who thought that he was really out of danger, was astonished to see me, as we left the room, with tears in my eyes. She inquired why I was crying. 'Eh, *mon Dieu*, Madame!' I replied, 'can you not see, from his breathing, his voice, and that hiccough, that the prince is dying.' She would not believe me, but she saw afterwards that I had spoken only too truly."[1]

In point of fact, scarcely had the two princesses left him, than the Duc de Berry had an alarming relapse, and his confessor, Père de la Rue, felt obliged to warn him that the time had come when he ought to think of receiving the Viaticum. "Very far from offering any objection," says Dangeau, "he expressed a desire to

[1] *Lettres inédites de la Princesse Palatine* (edit. Rolland), Letter of May 6, 1714.

do so, and, a little after ten o'clock, the King went to the chapel, where, since the beginning of the malady, a consecrated Host had been kept in readiness. The Viaticum and the holy oils were brought to the Duc de Berry ; and the King remained nearly an hour in his chamber, and saw him receive the Holy Sacrament, which he did with much devotion and respect. . . . The Duc d'Orléans went two hours after midnight to Versailles, to see the Duchesse de Berry, who had been desirous of coming here all day."[1]

At four o'clock next morning (Thursday, May 4), the Duc de Berry expired, in his twenty-eighth year. Shortly before the end, he related to Père de la Rue the accident which had happened to him the previous week, and which—or rather its concealment—had had such fatal consequences ; " but," observes Dangeau, " his mind was already beginning to wander." " When he had lost the power of speech," the chronicler continues, " he took the crucifix which his confessor placed in his hand, kissed it, and laid it on his heart. He died with much firmness and religion."[2]

The same day, while Louis XIV. was driving in the forest, the body of the deceased prince was removed, in one of his own carriages, to the Tuileries, escorted by the officers of his Household and his guards. Saint-Simon, in his notes to Dangeau's *Journal*, comments severely on this indecent haste, and declares that " in a private house people would have been ashamed to have the body of a servant carried away so precipitately so few hours after his death." The obsequies were celebrated at Saint-Denis on the 16th. The Duc d'Orléans was to have headed the

[1] *Journal*, May 3, 1714. [2] *Ibid.*, May 5, 1714.

procession, but the same odious reports against him as had been circulated at the time of the death of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne had again appeared, and he begged to be excused. His request was granted, and *Monsieur le Duc*[1] took his place.

On the day of the Duc de Berry's death, *Madame* went to Versailles to pay a visit of condolence to the widow. She found the bereaved princess in a state of such pitiable distress that she was moved with compassion and shed copious tears, although she must have had a shrewd suspicion that it was not so much her lost husband as her lost ambitions that the lady was bewailing. "From the woman the most happy in the world," she writes, "she is going to become the most miserable, if she does not have a son." And she adds: "She believes firmly that she will only have a daughter."[2]

The Duchesse de Berry continued to affect the most exaggerated grief for the husband to whom she had been so utterly indifferent. She shut herself up in her bedchamber, and caused the room to be draped in black and the shutters to be closed. When the King came to visit her, one of them was partly opened, so that there might be sufficient light to guide his footsteps, but this concession was made only for him; and all who came to condole with her found themselves in complete darkness." "This," says Saint-Simon, "gave rise to many ridiculous scenes and rather indecent laughter, which could not be restrained. Persons accustomed to the room could find their way, but those who were not

[1] Louis Henri, Duc de Bourbon, Prince de Condé.

[2] *Lettres inédites de la Princesse Palatine* (edit. Rolland), Letter of May 6, 1714.

stumbled at every step and required guidance. For want of this, Père Trévoux, and Père Le Tellier after him, both addressed their compliments to the wall; others to the foot of the bed. This became a secret amusement, but happily did not last long."

In fact, after about three weeks of this pretended despair, the duchess, having decided that she had paid a sufficiently touching tribute to her husband's memory, and atoned, in the eyes of the King and the Court, for any shortcomings while he was alive, was ready to face the light of day once more. Louis XIV., to testify his appreciation of such an example of conjugal devotion, increased her pension by 200,000 livres, so that she now found herself in possession of an income of over 650,000 livres, which, however, was to be hard put to stand the strain of her luxurious and extravagant mode of life.

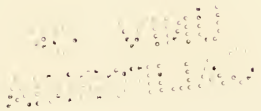
Notwithstanding the most elaborate precautions, to which, on this occasion, the Duchesse de Berry submitted willingly enough, since she knew how much the birth of a son would mean to her, the event once more took place before its time (June 16), when she was delivered, not of the hoped-for prince, but of a daughter, who only survived a few hours.

The princess was for a day or two seriously ill, but she was soon convalescent, and, though the knowledge that she could never now become the mother of a possible King of France distressed her not a little, her situation was still a very enviable one. The King, anxious to console her for her disappointment, overwhelmed her with favours and presents. He paid the greater part of the debts which she and the Duc de Berry had con-

MARIE LOUISE ÉLISABETH D'ORLÉANS, DUCHESSE DE BERRY,
IN WIDOW'S WEEDS

From the painting by Louis de Silvestre, at Versailles

(Photo by W. A. Mansell & Co.)



tracted during their married life;[1] gave her all the furniture and jewels which had belonged to her husband, and accorded her a favour to which she attached great importance, namely, that of having a company of twelve guards, to escort her when she drove out in her carriage and to keep watch and ward in her apartments. "I do not consider her [the Duchesse de Berry] unhappy, although she is without child or husband," writes *Madame*, a few weeks after her granddaughter's confinement. "She has a rank more elevated than that to which she would have been able to aspire; she has 250,000 livres of revenue more than I have; she is then very rich, and her Household is not more considerable than mine, which gives her more than she requires. She is young, in good health, so beloved by her father and mother[2] that they do everything that she wishes; and she possesses all the most beautiful things that one can have in jewellery. I cannot divine in what way she can be unhappy. If she were Queen, she would only be subject to more constraint."

The Duchesse de Berry was very far from being unhappy. During the year of mourning which etiquette prescribed, she was, of course, unable to appear at any Court function, but, in other respects, she behaved as if no change had occurred in her life; gambling, gossiping, and feasting with her friends, hunting either in her *calèche* or on horseback, and spending more time than ever in the company of her father, whom she frequently

[1] These debts, according to Dangeau, exceeded half a million livres, of which Louis XIV. paid 400,000 livres.

[2] The Duchesse d'Orléans, as *Madame* was well aware, certainly did not love her eldest daughter; but probably the writer did not consider it prudent to mention the fact.

entertained to dinner or supper, on which occasions they both seem to have eaten and drunk a good deal more than was good for them.[1] On the very day on which her year of mourning terminated, Louis XIV., who, deprived of all his family, had no one but her to give a little youth and animation to his Court, made her lay aside her widow's weeds, which, in accordance with custom, she should have worn for yet another six weeks, and preside over the gaming-tables in the salon at Marly; and from that time until his death, four months later, she enjoyed a degree of favour never surpassed, save in the case of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Madame de Maintenon, who, in the past, had felt obliged to admonish the duchess very severely on more than one occasion, appeared to share his Majesty's partiality, and, according to Dangeau, " people were persuaded that they were very satisfied with one another, and that Madame de Maintenon had found much intelligence in this princess." The fact is that the unrecognised consort of Louis XIV., aware that the King's days were numbered, was anxious to secure the protection of the Duc d'Orléans, and had decided that the best means to conciliate him was by caressing his adored daughter.

The Duchesse de Berry took full advantage of the indulgence extended to her, and, during the last weeks of the reign, throned it like a veritable queen. She presided at all the fêtes; she accompanied the King wherever he went, followed by a regular Court of ladies,

[1] Writing on December 2, 1714, *Madame* relates that she had suffered " a fright so terrible that she had not yet recovered," owing to a sudden illness of the Duc d'Orléans, the result of " having eaten like a wolf at his daughter's, and drunk still more, as was his invariable custom there."

whom she selected herself, and she obtained the signal privilege of having four *dames de compagnie* of her own, each of whom received a salary of 4000 livres, paid by the King.[1] Old courtiers marvelled at the complaisance of Louis XIV., hitherto so intolerant of the least deviation from his wishes, when they saw him modify the programme of amusements he had drawn up during a visit to Marly to gratify the caprice of his granddaughter, and not less at the temerity of that princess in venturing to suggest the alteration. Even the Duchesse de Bourgogne would scarcely have ventured to take such a liberty.

But, notwithstanding the indulgence which both the King and Madame de Maintenon now showed her, the princess never succeeded in altogether conquering the fear with which they had formerly inspired her, and was so embarrassed in their presence that people could not fail to perceive it. However, before the summer ended, Louis XIV. was no more, and Madame de Maintenon had retired to spend her last years among her beloved *protégées* at Saint-Cyr ; and, with their disappearance from the scene, the last restraint on the vices and caprices of the Duchesse de Berry was removed.

[1] The four "*dames*" were : the Comtesse de Brancas ; Madame de Coëtenfao, wife of the princess's *chevalier d'honneur ;* the Marquise de Clermont d'Amboise, and the Marquise de Pons. On the death of Madame de Coëtenfao, which occurred a few weeks later, her post was given to the Marquise d'Armentières.

CHAPTER V

Philippe d'Orléans becomes Regent, and the Duchesse de Berry prepares to reap the fruits of her father's triumph—She obtains the Luxembourg as a residence—Her attitude towards her mother—She secures permission to have officers to command her guards—She endeavours to usurp the honours of a queen—Her quarrel with the Prince de Conti—Her adventure in the gardens of the Luxembourg—She closes them to the public—She insults the civic dignitaries of Paris—She obtains La Muette as a country-residence—Her amours—The Chevalier de Rion—Portrait of this personage—Madame de Mouchy—Her detestable character—Rion becomes *amant en titre* of the Duchesse de Berry—Infatuation of the princess—Singular attitude of Rion towards her—Supper-parties at the Luxembourg—A complaisant confessor.

THE approaching death of Louis XIV. had been viewed by the Duchesse de Berry with considerable anxiety, since the intrigues which were on foot to place the Duc du Maine, the beloved brother of the Duchesse d'Orléans, in power, and, in consequence, to increase the influence of that princess, could not fail, in the event of their success, to diminish immeasurably her own importance. But the moment she learned that the old King's will had been set aside, and that her father had triumphed over her uncle and secured the Regency, all her fears as to the future were dispelled, and she joyfully prepared to reap the fruits of victory.

Her first act was to demand from the Regent the Luxembourg as a residence. This request having been accorded, she insisted that all the persons who had apartments there should vacate them immediately, in

order that there might be no delay in preparing the palace for her reception, "which embarrassed them so much," writes Buvat, "that they knew not where to go, since there were no apartments nor any house vacant in the neighbourhood."[1] The last week in September saw her installed there with her little Court, and celebrating her advent by boisterous supper-parties, at one of which the new ruler of France assisted.

Once in possession of the Luxembourg, the Duchesse de Berry determined to spare no effort to make it the centre of the fashionable world, and proceeded to institute lansquenet-parties, alternating with those given by the Duchesse d'Orléans at the Palais-Royal. At the latter's parties she never condescended to appear; indeed, being no longer under the necessity of maintaining some appearance of deference towards her mother, she ignored her altogether. At the same time, she largely increased her Household, and demanded of her father permission to have officers to command her guards. The Regent hesitated, for this was a privilege which had never been granted to "a daughter of France," much less to a "granddaughter," and Maria Theresa of Austria, the wife of Louis XIV., had been the first queen to enjoy it. But, as he was never able to oppose much resistance to his eldest daughter's caprices, he soon yielded, according, however, the same honour to his mother; and the princess proceeded to appoint a captain, a lieutenant and an ensign, the first charge being given to the Chevalier de Roye,[2] who had lately succeeded La Haye in her

[1] *Journal de la Régence*, September, 1715.

[2] Barthélemy de la Rochefoucauld, known later under the title of the Marquis de la Rochefoucauld. He married Mlle. Prondre, daughter of a wealthy revenue-farmer, and died in 1724.

affections, and the lieutenancy to a certain Chevalier de Rion, of whom we shall have a good deal to say presently.

To testify her respect for the memory of the late King, the Duchesse de Berry had announced her intention of not going to the play for six months, and she kept her word. Singularly enough, however, she seemed to consider that there could be no possible objection to her patronising any other form of entertainment within the walls of a theatre during the period of mourning, for on January 4, 1716, she appeared, in a superb toilette, at the masked-ball at the Opera,[1] followed by several of the other princesses. This visit was repeated several times during the ensuing Carnival.

In a letter written in the first days of the new year, *Madame* bewails the conduct of her eldest granddaughter, whose reformation she had now abandoned as an altogether hopeless undertaking: "The Duchesse de Berry has always about her persons who lead her astray. I have ceased to speak to her. She is intelligent, but she has been very badly brought up. I no longer look upon her as one of my grandchildren; she regards me in the same way; I do not trouble about her, and she does not trouble about me."[2]

The Duchesse de Berry certainly did not trouble about her grandmother, or about any one else, for that

[1] These balls were inaugurated at the end of 1715, at the suggestion of the Chevalier de Bouillon, who received for it a pension of 6000 livres. They took place three times a week, people paid at the doors, and the boxes were thrown open to those who did not care to dance. "A contrivance admirably invented and of easy and instantaneous application," says Saint-Simon, "was made to cover the orchestra and put the stage and the pit on the same level."

[2] *Correspondance complète de Madame, duchesse d'Orléans*, Letter of January 7, 1716.

matter. At this moment, she was obsessed by one idea: that of usurping the rank and privileges of a queen. For the favours she had already obtained from Louis XIV. and the Regent, far from contenting her, had served merely to stimulate her ambition and to encourage her to put forward far more exorbitant pretensions; and she was determined that the public should see for itself that she was first lady in the land. She began by insisting that the young King should visit her at the Luxembourg on the second occasion on which he quitted the Tuileries after the expiration of his period of mourning—his first visit had, of course, been paid to the Palais-Royal—and had the satisfaction of seeing the royal carriages standing before her door, to testify to the gaping Parisians the consideration in which she was held. A few days later, she issued in state from the Luxembourg, escorted by her guards, and preceded by kettledrummers sounding their instruments, and defiled in this fashion along the whole length of the Quai des Tuileries. Since no one, not even a Queen of France, had the right of being preceded by music in any town in which the Sovereign happened to be residing, the princess had been guilty of a most outrageous piece of presumption; and the Maréchal de Villeroy, Louis XV.'s *gouverneur*, went at once to the Regent to complain of it in the strongest possible terms. The latter, recognising the impossibility of upholding his daughter, reprimanded her sharply and forbade her ever to repeat such an escapade. The princess was thus obliged to renounce this pretension, but immediately afterwards she attempted a new innovation.

Ever since the death of the late King she had sought

to make herself the arbitrix, not only of the fashions, but of the pleasures of the capital, and, among other things, had affected to take a great interest in theatrical affairs. The supervision of the Paris theatres appertained to the Ducs d'Aumont and de Tresme, in their capacity as First Gentlemen of the Chamber; but, to the profound disgust of these two noblemen, the Duchesse de Berry proceeded to associate herself with them, and to meddle in every matter which was submitted for their decision. Thus, in the previous October, she had insisted, notwithstanding the efforts of d'Aumont to protect them, on the dismissal of four actors, La Chaise, Durand, Clavereau, and La Morancourt, from the Comédie-Française, on the ground that their acting was unworthy of the national theatre. The unfortunate players, in consequence, stood in considerable awe of her, not knowing who might not be her next victim, and were ready to flatter her to her heart's content.

Aware of this, and assured of the complaisance of the Gentlemen of the Chamber, she resolved to seek compensation for the rebuff she had just sustained, by arranging that her first visit to the Comédie-Française should be attended by an amount of ceremonial which would have been appropriate only in the case of a Queen or a Dauphine. She appeared in full Court toilette and entered her box, above which a canopy had been erected. Four of her guards were on duty on the stage; others were dispersed about the theatre; and, before the play began, the actor Breteuil addressed to her a fulsome harangue, in the name of his fellow-*sociétaires*. The astonishment was general, and the presumption of the princess was so severely criticised that she never ven-

tured to repeat it. Henceforward she avoided the "Comédie," from fear lest it should be thought that she had renounced her pretensions, and patronised the Opera, where she contented herself with one of the smaller boxes, and was not received with any ceremony. However, two or three weeks later, her vanity was the cause of a very pretty quarrel between her and the Prince de Conti, in which her Royal Highness got decidedly the worst of it.

As she was going one day to the Opera, preceded as usual by her guards, the latter stopped the coach of the Prince de Conti, who was also on his way thither, and one of them struck the coachman, because he refused to pull up his horses, in order to allow the princess to precede his master. Although the Duchesse de Berry, being the widow of a "grandson of France," was within her strict right in requiring the carriage of a Prince of the Blood to make way for hers, this was an altogether different matter from seeking to vindicate her superior rank by violent means; and Conti was furiously indignant. On arriving at the theatre, he complained to La Rochefoucauld-Roye, the captain of the offending guards, and, failing to obtain satisfaction from that personage, addressed himself to the Duc d'Orléans, and demanded reparation for the affront in such forcible terms that the Regent insisted on his daughter according him a personal interview at the Luxembourg and endeavouring to placate him. "He came there," writes Saint-Simon; "the conversation, very inappropriately, took place in public, and, to tell the truth, with all her intelligence, she extricated herself from it very badly. She reproached the prince with not having addressed himself to her; she wanted

to accuse the coachman and to excuse the guard. Then, perceiving that she would not succeed, and that the Duc d'Orléans intended to be obeyed, she told the Prince de Conti, that, since he wished this guard to go to prison, to prison he should go, but that she entreated that he should only remain there a little while. The latter was compassionate; in fact, the guard was no sooner sent to prison than he came out again, at the request of the Prince de Conti." Nevertheless, the fact remained that the princess had been compelled to admit herself in the wrong, and had sustained a defeat very galling to her pride.

The pretensions of the Duchesse de Berry did not contribute to endear her to the Parisians, and a few weeks after the incident just recorded she was so ill-advised as to take a step which rendered her still more unpopular.

The beautiful gardens of the Luxembourg had always been open to the public, and on summer evenings were the favourite resort of the residents of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Now, the Duchesse de Berry was always very curious to learn what the public happened to be saying about her, and often, as soon as it was dusk and there was little chance of her being recognised, she sallied out incognito into the gardens, to mingle with the throng of pleasure-seekers and listen to their conversation. For some little time she indulged this caprice without any unpleasantness occurring, but, one evening, towards the end of June, while she and three of her favourites, Mesdames de la Rochefoucauld, de Mouchy, and d'Arpajon, were promenading as usual, they attracted the attention of a group of young lawyers' clerks, who accosted them, without, of course, having the

least suspicion of their identity. Wishing to sustain the character which they had assumed for the occasion—that of women of the middle-class—the ladies entered into conversation with the young men and began to laugh and jest with them somewhat freely, with the consequence that the latter presently became so familiar that the noble dames were obliged to summon the gatekeepers to their assistance.[1]

Although the princess had brought this adventure upon herself, she was, nevertheless, extremely indignant and decided to close the gardens to the public and deprive the residents of the Faubourg Saint-Germain of a privilege which they had enjoyed ever since the palace had been built, and had come to look upon almost as a right. The popular indignation, which found vent in more than one mordant *chanson* at the expense of the august tenant of the Luxembourg, was aggravated by the fact that the closing of the gardens had been carried out without any previous notice, and that, on the first evening, a number of people had got shut in and had been compelled, in spite of their remonstrances, to pass the night there.

The princess's action was not only bitterly resented

[1] A very similar adventure befell the princess at a masked ball at the Comédie-Française, at the beginning of the following January. "On January 18," writes Buvat, "the Duchesse de Berry, being disguised and masked at the ball at the Comédie-Française, a strange mask approached the princess, whom he did not recognise, said to her some words of gallantry, and became so familiar as to take her by the chin, in order to embrace her. By which she thought herself so offended that, having removed her mask, she ordered her officers to arrest the unknown, to unmask him, to undress him, and to expose him in this condition on the stage, to the derision of the numerous company which had assembled. Having endured this for some time, he was permitted to resume his clothes and his mask" (*Journal de la Régence*, January 1717).

by the citizens, but was severely criticised in exalted circles. The Duc de Bourbon, between whose family and the Orléans a bitter feud had for some time existed, hastened to show his sympathy with the faubourg by throwing open the garden of the Hôtel de Condé to the public; and, on the occasion of a musical fête at the Tuileries, the little King was heard to remark, as he looked down from the terrace on the joyous crowd below: "I do not intend to act like Madame de Berry; it is my wish that every one shall enter my gardens."[1]

If it had been the deliberate intention of the duchess to make herself detested by every class in the community, she was certainly going the right way to achieve her purpose, for towards the end of that summer she contrived to offend mortally the susceptibilities of the civic dignitaries of Paris, a body notorious for the jealousy with which they regarded any attack on their privileges, or what they conceived to be their privileges. We read in the *Journal de la Régence*, under date August 28, 1716:

"M. Trudon, *maître des requêtes*, has lately been elected Provost of the Merchants. He and the sheriffs went to salute the King, and from there they proceeded to the Luxembourg to salute the Duchesse de Berry, and rode in their carriages to the end of the courtyard, as far as the foot of the staircase. But, as they were ascending, Madame de Berry, knowing that their carriages had entered, sent orders with the utmost despatch to make them go out again, and to put the guard who had permitted them to enter under arrest. However, she received these gentlemen very graciously, and they com-

[1] *Gazette de la Régence*, August 24, 1716.

plimented her on behalf of the town. This done, the provost, who was returning, having ascertained that the carriages had been sent away, retraced his steps and told Madame de Berry that they had been accorded this honour by the late *Monseigneur* at Meudon, when their carriages had entered the courtyard of the château, and that they believed that this privilege was their due. Upon which, Madame de Berry said to them that *Monseigneur* might do as he wished, but that she intended to uphold her dignity, and turned her back on them in an excessively haughty manner. This matter has been the subject of several discussions, and perhaps on the next New Year's Day the municipal authorities will not visit her."

The possession of the beautiful palace which had been the home of Marie de' Medici, of Gaston d'Orléans, and of *la Grande Mademoiselle* did not content the Duchesse de Berry; she desired to have a country-residence, where she could spend the summer months, and where she would be more at liberty than at the Luxembourg. Having thought of several in turn, she eventually decided upon La Muette, a hunting-lodge at the entry of the Bois de Boulogne, belonging to Armenonville, who had successively filled the offices of Director-General of France, Minister of Marine, and Keeper of the Seals. Armenonville had spent considerable sums on the improvement of La Muette, and, yielding to the entreaties of his wife, who was greatly attached to the place, declared that nothing would induce him to part with it. But the princess coveted it as did Ahab the vineyard of the hapless Naboth; and he was obliged to submit before a formal order of the Regent, and to take in exchange

the Château of Madrid[1] and the sum of 10,000 livres a year for life (May 1716). The Duchesse de Berry thus became the owner of one of the most charming country-residences in the neighbourhood of Paris,[2] of which she lost no time in taking possession ; and was so delighted with it, that for the moment she felt at peace with all the world, and on July 2 gave a grand dinner in honour of her mother, by way of a house-warming. As for poor Madame d'Armenonville, she died in the following December; " and it is said," writes Buvat, " that it was from grief at having been obliged to surrender her beautiful house of La Muette to the Duchesse de Berry." [3]

Both La Muette and the Luxembourg were soon to witness strange things. We have mentioned that La Haye, the gallant with whom the duchess had proposed to fly to the Netherlands, had been succeeded in her affections by La Rochefoucauld-Roye, the captain of her guards. That personage, however, was not permitted to enjoy his *bonne fortune* very long, and at the end of a few months found himself replaced, in his turn, by the Marquis de Bonnivet, a species of *chevalier d'industrie*, upon whom the princess conferred the post of master of her wardrobe. But M. de Bonnivet's favour was even

[1] The Château of Madrid, situated at the extremity of the Bois de Boulogne, in the direction of Saint-Cloud, had been built by François I., and received its name in commemoration of that monarch's captivity in the Spanish capital.

[2] " I went on Sunday morning to Passy. While there, I went to see La Muette, that is to say, the apartments and the gardens of the Duchesse de Berry, who was spending all the Sunday and Monday in Paris, to perform her devotions. She returns on Tuesday, and will pass all the summer there. It is a delicious little château, nobly furnished. From the princess's bed she is able to see the garden and all kinds of pleasing objects ; nothing presents itself to her eyes which is not agreeable " (*Gazette de la Régence*, May 21, 1717).

[3] *Journal de la Régence*, December, 1716.

briefer than that of his predecessor; and, in the course of the summer of 1716, her Royal Highness transferred her heart to the keeping of a young man who was to remain in possession of it for the rest of her life, and for whose sake she showed herself ready to brave all scandal, and to expose herself to the public view with a shamelessness which had no parallel in the case of a woman of such exalted station.

Sicaire Antonin Armand Auguste Nicolas d'Aydie, Chevalier de Rion—to give this fortunate young man his full name—hailed from Gascony, a province whose name has been for centuries a synonym for courage, assurance, pertinacity, and other qualities necessary for the successful adventurer. He was of good birth, a son of the Comte de Benanges and of Diane de Bautru de Nogent, a niece on the distaff side of the aged Duc de Lauzun. But he was poor as the proverbial rat, and, after serving for a while as a subaltern in a cavalry regiment stationed in a provincial town, he came, early in 1715, to Paris, in the hope of bettering his fortunes, at the suggestion, it would appear, of Madame de Pons, who had lately succeeded Madame de la Vieuville as *dame d'atours* to the Duchesse de Berry, and to whom he was distantly related.

Rion was at this time about twenty-two years of age, "a short, stout lad," says Saint-Simon, "with a round, pale face, so thickly covered with pimples that it bore no bad resemblance to an abscess." The portrait which *Madame* draws of him is still less flattering. "I cannot conceive," she writes, "how any one can love this rogue: he has neither face nor figure; he has the appearance of a water-sprite, for he has a green and yellow

countenance ; his mouth, his nose, and his eyes are like those of a Chinaman ; one would take him for a baboon rather than for a Gascon, as he is. He is foppish and not in the least intelligent ; he has a big head shut in between broad shoulders ; and one sees by his eyes that his sight is not very good. In short, he is a very ugly rogue ; but he is said to be excessively amorous, and that charms all the debauched women. The Polignac[1] shut herself up with him for two days."

Rion was a good-humoured, pleasant little man, modest, courteous, and obliging—" a good and honest fellow."[2] His relationship to Madame de Pons secured him admission to the Luxembourg, where his charming manners created a very favourable impression, and where he succeeded in captivating the heart—or rather the senses—of Madame de Mouchy, a young woman who had for some time past enjoyed the entire confidence of the Duchesse de Berry.

Of all the undesirable women whom the Duchesse de Berry had gathered about her this Madame de Mouchy was infinitely the worst. The daughter of a small government official, named Forcadèle, and of the duchess's first waiting-woman, " who, become a widow, had long kept house with a married man,"[3] she had succeeded in insinuating herself into the princess's favour soon after the dismissal of Mlle. de Vienne, and rapidly acquired over her a great and most pernicious influence. Married in 1714, through the good offices of her patroness, to a complaisant nobleman, the Marquis de Mouchy, she had,

[1] On the amorous adventures of the Comtesse de Polignac, see the author's *The Fascinating Duc de Richelieu* (London, Methuen ; New New York, Scribner, 1910).

[2] Saint-Simon. [3] *Madame*, Letter of September 8, 1713.

without as yet occupying any official position at the Luxembourg, the privilege of constant access to the princess, who seldom took any step of importance without consulting her.

Madame de Mouchy was the evil genius of the Luxembourg. Saint-Simon describes her as possessed of "a talent and inventive resources wholly employed for purposes of the most horrible baseness, an unparalleled effrontery, and a greed for self-advancement which prompted her to undertake everything, with all the intelligence, the art and the cunning requisite to insure success; always with an end in view, and saying and doing nothing without some purpose, however frivolous and trivial what she said or did might seem. To *Madame* she is "a wicked sorceress," "a shameless woman," "the most unworthy favourite who had ever been seen"; and all contemporary writers agree in representing her as an *intrigante* of the most dangerous kind.

Through the influence of Madame de Mouchy, when officers were appointed to command the guards of the Duchesse de Berry, Rion obtained the post of lieutenant; but her Royal Highness's affections were just then occupied by the Marquis de Bonnivet, and for some six months the chevalier rode beside the princess's coach without attracting more than a passing glance from its occupant. And then Bonnivet was pensioned off, and, shortly afterwards, this uncomely little Gascon adventurer found himself the object of a passion such as few men so shabbily treated by Nature can ever have been fated to inspire, and which must have occasioned him as much astonishment as joy.

Certain writers have assured us that the Duchesse

de Berry paid Madame de Mouchy a large sum in order to induce the latter to surrender to her her lover. And the Abbé de Vauxcelles, in one of the marginal notes which he inserted in a copy of the *Mémoires secrets* of Duclos, but which we dare not venture to transcribe, says that the author related to him that, when this cynical bargain had been concluded, Madame de Mouchy gave Rion, as yet quite unconscious of his good fortune, a rendezvous at which the princess took her place.

There is no truth in this. Madame de Mouchy did not need any inducement to surrender her prior claims upon Rion. She was scarcely the kind of woman to prefer sentiment to interest, and she was well aware that, with the aid of the chevalier, she would be able to dominate the mind of the princess even more absolutely than she already did. For some time she appears to have been watching for an opportunity of recommending Rion to the notice of her royal friend, and the occasion arrived with the dismissal of Bonnivet. So persistently, yet so adroitly, did she sing his praises that the Duchesse de Berry could not fail to be impressed. She began to regard her lieutenant of the guards more closely; she approved; she loved, and ended by becoming hopelessly infatuated.

And this infatuation she made not the smallest effort to conceal; on the contrary, she appeared to glory in it, with the consequence that it was speedily the talk of both Court and town. Nothing was too good for this paragon of gallants; she could not do enough to testify the devotion with which he had inspired her. She purchased for him the command of the Régiment de Soissonnais, for which she paid the sum of 30,000 livres; she

installed him in a suite of commodious apartments in close proximity to the Luxembourg, and furnished them magnificently; she decked him in the richest clothes covered with the most superb lace; she loaded him with jewels, and, needless to say, with money. And, having done all this, she fell down and worshipped him!

"Rion," says Saint-Simon, "soon understood the power of his charms, which could only have captivated the incomprehensible and depraved fancy of a princess. He did not abuse this power, and made himself liked by every one; but he treated the Duchesse de Berry as M. de Lauzun had treated *Mademoiselle*. He took pleasure in making the princess long after him and be jealous, and feigned to be still more jealous of her. Often he made her shed tears. Little by little, he acquired such authority over her that she dared not do anything without his permission, not even the most trivial things. If she were ready to go to the Opera, he made her stay away; at other times he made her go thither when she did not wish to. He made her behave well to many ladies whom she disliked, and treat ill persons who pleased her, but of whom he pretended to be jealous. Even in her toilette she was not allowed the smallest liberty. He amused himself by making her disarrange her coiffure or change her gown, when she was fully dressed; and that so often and so publicly that he accustomed her at last to take over-night his orders for her morning's toilette and occupation; and on the morrow he would change everything. At length, she actually sent messages to him by confidential servants several times during her toilette, to know what ribbons she should wear; the same with her gown and other things; and nearly always he made

her wear what she did not wish for. If she ever dared to do the least thing without his permission, he treated her like a serving-wench, and her tears sometimes lasted several days. Every one at the Luxembourg paid court to M. de Rion, who, on his side, took care to be on good terms with all the world, nay, with an air of respect that he refused, even in public, to his princess. He often gave sharp replies to her in society, which made people lower their eyes, and brought blushes to the cheek of the Duchesse de Berry, who, nevertheless, did not attempt to conceal her submission and her passion, even before others."

Rion appears to have adopted this line of conduct at the suggestion of the cynical Duc de Lauzun, who was delighted at the idea of seeing his nephew play at the Luxembourg the rôle which had been his own in the time of *la Grande Mademoiselle*. "He had imbued him with the family principles," says Duclos, "and had persuaded him that he would lose his mistress if he spoiled her by respectful tenderness, and that princesses liked to be scolded."[1] Rion had followed his uncle's counsels, and the result proved their efficacy.

And so people witnessed the strange spectacle of this princess, so disdainful with her mother, so imperious with her father, so arrogant towards all the world, cringing before a cadet of Gascony.

The supper-parties at the Luxembourg became the counterpart of the bacchanalian repasts of the Palais-Royal. Rion selected the guests and chose the days, and "the Duchesse de Berry disgraced herself by sitting down to table with him and obscure people; she with

[1] Duclos, *Mémoires secrets*.

whom no man could lawfully eat if he were not a Prince of the Blood."[1] Among the most frequent *habitués* was the so-called director of the princess's conscience, Père Riglet, a complaisant Jesuit, who "drank enough to make a Musketeer stagger, and simultaneously related anecdotes which would have brought a blush to the cheek of a Garde-Française."[2] If the duchess ever went to him for ghostly counsel, she must have been saved the trouble of confessing a good many things, of which he had been a witness.

Madame de Mouchy was the worthy confidante of the lovers, and performed the duty of peacemaker whenever one of their frequent quarrels threatened to go too far. "She lived in secret with Rion as the Duchesse de Berry lived openly, and was better treated by him than the princess, without the latter daring to take notice of it, from fear of a scandal which would have caused her to lose so dear a lover and a confidante so necessary."[3]

[1] Saint-Simon.

[2] M. Funck-Brentano, *la Régence*.

[3] Saint-Simon.

CHAPTER VI

The Duchesse de Berry takes an apartment at the Carmelite convent in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, and varies her scandalous life by intervals of prayer and fasting—Indignation of the Regent at the public reign of Rion, to which, however, he tamely submits—The Duchesse de Berry assists at the orgies of the Palais-Royal—Continuation of the abominable rumours concerning the relations between Philippe d'Orléans and his eldest daughter—The satires of Voltaire—The *Philippiques* of La Grange-Chancel—Contemptuous indifference to public opinion shown by the Regent and the Duchesse de Berry—Voltaire sent to the Bastille—First representation of the poet's *Œdipe*—Conduct of the *parterre*—Visit of Peter the Great to the Duchesse de Berry—Distressing *embonpoint* of the princess—Her gluttony—A revolution of the palace: Rion becomes first equerry to the princess and Madame de Mouchy *dame d'atours*——Indignation of Mesdames de Clermont and de Beauvau, *dames de compagnie* to the Duchesse de Berry, who resign their posts—Episode at the Opera—Rion appointed Governor of Cognac.

SINGULAR to relate, in the midst of this disgraceful state of affairs, the princess, hitherto so profoundly indifferent to religion, suddenly took into her head to have an apartment at the Carmelite convent in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, that celebrated house which had been the scene of the penitence of Louise de la Vallière and of many another high-born dame. Thither she sometimes repaired in the afternoon, always slept there on the eve of great fasts or festivals, and not infrequently remained several days. She went accompanied by two or three ladies and scarcely a single servant; was served with whatever the convent could supply for her table; attended all the services; some-

times remained a long while in prayer, and fasted rigidly on the appointed days. She appears to have been subject to occasional qualms of conscience, and to have cherished the strange illusion that, by observing the outward ceremonies of the Church, she could repair the scandal of her life, instead of which she merely aggravated it.

Two of the younger Carmelites, who combined with their piety a considerable knowledge of the world, received instructions to attach themselves to the duchess during her visits to the convent. When they had become on familiar terms, they spoke to the lady boldly, and told her that if they knew nothing of her but what they saw, that they should admire her as a saint; but, elsewhere, they learned that she led a very irregular life, and so publicly that they could not conceive why she came. "The Duchesse de Berry laughed at this, and was not angry. Sometimes they lectured her, called people and things by their names, and exhorted her to change so scandalous a life. But it was all in vain. She lived as before at the Luxembourg and at the Carmelites, and caused people to wonder at this extraordinary conduct."[1]

The Regent was indignant at the public reign of Rion, the more so since his daughter returned to him with interest the treatment which she received from her lover. Several times he threatened to go to the Luxembourg and order the impudent little Gascon to be thrown out of the window. But he went no farther than threats, and even these were never uttered in the presence of the Duchesse de Berry, to whom he showed almost as much submission as she herself did to Rion. Rion, on his side,

[1] Saint-Simon.

treated the Regent with all the respect that was his due, and never attempted to interfere with the intimacy between him and his daughter, preferring to make use of the latter's influence with her father to advance his own interests.

The two accordingly continued to spend a great part of their time together. The Regent generally visited the Luxembourg between five and six o'clock, when the official part of his day was over, and he was free to devote himself to pleasure; sometimes he would remain to supper; at others, he would bring his daughter back with him to the Palais-Royal, to assist at those too-celebrated repasts, which generally began about nine o'clock, and often continued far into the small hours of the following morning.

It was, indeed, a strange company which assembled round the supper-table of the ruler of France. There might be seen that band of dissolute men whom the prince had dubbed his "*roués*": Fargès, one of the handsomest men of his time, the darling of all the ladies; the Chevalier de Simiane, who wrote excellent verses, but who was a still better drinker; La Fare, captain of the Regent's guards, nicknamed "*le bon enfant*"; Broglie, "whose pleasantries consisted in saying coarsely the most filthy things";[1] Nocé and Brancas; d'Effiat and Canillac. And with them a group of women as depraved as themselves: Madame de Parabère, *maîtresse en titre* of their host, "whom the Regent called his '*petit corbeau noir*,' when he was at the first glass of champagne, and his '*gigot*' at the last";[2] Madame

[1] *Madame.*

[2] Édouard de Barthélemy, *les Filles du Régent.*

d'Averne, who succeeded the Parabère in the prince's affections; the Duchesse de Gesvres, who could drink against any man present; Mesdames de Nesle and de Polignac, who fought a duel in the Bois de Boulogne for the sake of the *beaux yeux* of the Duc de Richelieu; Madame de Gacé, who once at a supper-party, Mathieu Marais tells us, after priming herself with wine and all kinds of liqueurs, danced "almost naked" before the company, and then went into the ante-chamber and gave a second performance for the benefit of the lackeys; the Duchesse d'Albret, who, according to Buvat, "died from the complaisance that she had to drink quantities of liqueurs with the Duchesse de Berry"; and Madame de Mouchy, whom we have already described.

And this strange company was frequently reinforced by some Opera-girl upon whom the Regent or one of his friends happened to have cast a favourable eye, or some playwright, actor or poet, who could be trusted to contribute to the gaiety of the evening by improvised couplets or witty sallies.

When the servants had laid the table, they withdrew, and the rule was that guests should wait upon themselves. The doors were then closed, and "all Paris might have been in flames—there was no longer any Regent; he was inaccessible to every one. From that moment there were neither princes, nor actors, nor mistresses in the company, neither etiquette nor ceremony; differences of rank were blended in a perfect equality, and the person who could say the most piquant things was the one who ruled."[1] "It was at these parties," writes Saint-Simon, "that the character of every one was

[1] Soulavie, *Mémoires du Duc de Richelieu.*

passed in review, with the utmost freedom. The gallantries past and present of the Court and the town; all old stories, disputes, jokes, absurdities were raked up; nobody was spared." The company drank to excess, the Regent himself setting the example; and, as the night wore on, they vied with one another in blasphemy and obscenity, and the most unbridled licence prevailed. "Sometimes even—dare I say it?—the candles were extinguished, and the Duc d'Orléans, who, from his nature, was very inquisitive concerning scandalous anecdotes, having, on one occasion, placed two lighted torches in a tall cupboard favourably situated, threw open the two folding-doors at the same time, and in a moment revealed important secrets to the company."[1]

The Duchesse de Berry was in her element at these orgies, and seldom failed to leave them in a disgraceful state of intoxication. She was also the foremost to take part in the cynical entertainments which were sometimes improvised there; and, on one occasion, together with Madame de Parabère and Madame d'Averne, appeared in a *tableau-vivant* entitled *le Jugement de Paris*, which was represented after the ancient bas-reliefs, with an absolute realism.

We can scarcely be surprised that the constant visits of the Regent to the Luxembourg, and the presence of his daughter among the debauched men and shameless women whom he gathered round his supper-table at the Palais-Royal, should have encouraged the circulation of those infamous reports which the malignity of *Madame la Duchesse* and her friends had set on foot, and which had already spread so far among the public. For the

[1] Soulavie, *Mémoires du duc de Richelieu.*

arrogance of the Duchesse de Berry had rendered her, as we have seen, extremely unpopular, while the Regent, as every head of a State must do, had made many enemies, who were not too scrupulous as to the weapons they employed to injure him. Soon the horrible accusations, which had hitherto been only whispered about, began, so to speak, to be proclaimed from the housetops, and a regular campaign of calumny was inaugurated.

The *chansonniers* were the first to take the field, and numerous couplets began to make their appearance, none of which would it be possible to cite. Voltaire, who detested the Regent, was himself accused of having perpetrated two pieces of verse, entitled respectively *les Moabites* and *les Ammonites*, in which the Duc d'Orléans and his daughter were assailed in an abominable manner, and which were quoted everywhere. According to his custom, he hastened to disavow them, but his friend Cideville always persisted in attributing their authorship to him, notwithstanding all his denials, and they are to be found in Beuchot's edition of his works. He certainly merited the Bastille ; but the Regent did not wish to punish him in a fashion calculated to increase the scandal, and accordingly contented himself by causing an intimation to be conveyed to the malicious poet that it would be advisable for him to leave Paris for a season (May 1716). The charge was repeated, in a more detailed and far grosser form, by that implacable enemy of the Regent, La Grange-Chancel, who consecrated the whole of the third ode of his famous *Philippiques* to the supposed relations between the Duc d'Orléans and his daughter. Then it was the turn of the pamphleteers, among whose productions may be

mentioned *la Chronique véritable du preux chevalier don Philippus d'Aurélie ; les Aventures du Prince Papyrius, surnommé Pillé-Argent, gouverneur des Francs sots,* and *Prosopopée sur le Régent, la duchesse de Berry et le Cardinal Dubois,* a species of comedy in three acts, which passes in the infernal regions, where Pluto, Rhadamanthus and Minos sit in judgment upon the three. Finally, the caricaturists advanced to the attack, and permitted their pencils as much licence as did the others their pens.

We have said that these atrocious accusations have not been accepted by any serious historian, and there can be no doubt that, shamelessly debauched as were both father and daughter, they were perfectly innocent of the crime attributed to them.[1] But, at the same time, it must be admitted that the deplorable obstinacy of the Duc d'Orléans, who, aware that he was odiously compromising his daughter in the eyes of a public greedy of scandal, continued to spend long hours alone in her company, and the abandoned life led by the Duchesse de Berry with hardly a pretence at concealment, encouraged people to believe all that the *chansonniers* and pamphleteers recounted. That both were perfectly informed of the scandalous reports which were in circulation is

[1] M. Funck-Brentano, in his admirable history of the Regency, makes some interesting observations on this subject. "That criminal relations existed between them," he writes, "we do not believe. Apart from the idle talk held by those whom Saint-Simon calls 'the tongues of Satan,' contemporaries have transmitted nothing. The letters exchanged between father and daughter bear no trace of it; they do not furnish the slightest indication; and other arguments than the calumnies raked together by the Du Hautchamps and the Soulavies; other texts than the strophes of the *Philippiques* and the *chansons* of the gutter—or of the *ruelles,* which is worse—would be required to establish a fact like that."

proved by a curious letter of *Madame*, dated March 10, 1718:

"On the 4th, Madame de Berry invited her father to come and stay the night at La Muette, for the vintagers' fête. The duke wrote asking how the devotions of the Carmelites would be edified at seeing her father sleep a night in her house. To which Madame de Berry replied that she had never heard it said that it was contrary to devotion for a father to pass the night at his daughter's house, and that she did not know what scandal there could be in that."

A few months later, however, an incident occurred which must have convinced them that they had gone a little too far in their contemptuous indifference to public opinion.

It will be remembered that, in May 1716, Voltaire had been recommended to quit Paris for a season. He retired to Sully-sur-Loire, where he remained until the beginning of the following year, when he returned to the capital and recommenced his malicious pleasantries at the expense of the Regent and his daughter. In March, he was sent to the Bastille, as a punishment for two satires, *J'ai vu* and *Puero regnante*, both of which were ascribed to his pen—the first, it would seem, incorrectly—and remained there for over a year.[1] On his release

[1] Voltaire was entrapped into a confession of his delinquencies by one Beauregard, a cunning agent of the secret police—a *mouche*, as one said then—whom he believed to be his friend. Here is his report: "I saw him [Voltaire] at his lodging, Rue de la Calandre, at the Panier Vert, when he asked me what news there was. I answered that a number of works on the Duc d'Orléans and the Duchesse de Berry had appeared. He began to laugh and asked me if they were considered good. I told him that they were thought very witty, and that people placed all that to his account, but that I did not believe any-

(April 11, 1718), he was exiled to Châtenay, but, a few weeks later, was permitted to return to Paris. He came with his *Œdipe*, which he had corrected during his enforced seclusion in the Bastille, in his pocket, and on November 18 this tragedy was produced, with prodigious success, at the Comédie-Française.

Although the Duc d'Orléans must have been aware that a malevolent public would be certain to recognise in the incestuous person of the husband of Jocasta an allusion to the frightful morals attributed to the ruler of France—indeed, certain persons had already substituted in pencil the name of Philippe for Œdipe on the playbills—he had the temerity to assist at the first representation, accompanied by the Duchesse d'Orléans, *Madame*, and his three elder daughters. The manner in which every passage which could be applied to the Regent was received soon revealed the hostile attitude of the *parterre ;* but the prince affected to ignore it, talking and laughing with his daughters and sometimes joining in the applause directed against himself ; and the Duchesse de Berry followed his example. But when, in the last act, the high priest asked Œdipe the question : " *Savez-vous seulement avec qui vous vivez ?* " And a spectator promptly anticipated the ill-fated king's reply by crying out : " *Plaisante question ! qui le sait mieux que lui ?* " they

thing of the kind, and that it was impossible at his age (Voltaire was then twenty-two) to write such things."

Voltaire answered that he was wrong not to believe it.

" He told me," continues Beauregard, " that, since he was unable to avenge himself on the Duc d'Orléans in a certain fashion, he should not spare him in his satires. I asked him what the Duc d'Orléans had done to him. He was lying down at the moment, but he rose up like a madman, and replied : ' What ! you do not know what that . . . has done to me ? He exiled me, because I had written publicly that his Messalina of a daughter was a . . ."

changed countenance. And the Duchesse de Berry is said to have nearly swooned away, when after the verses:

> O Corinthe! ô Phocide! exécrable hyménée!
> Je vois naître une race infâme, infortunée,
> Digne de sa naissance, et de qui la fureur
> Remplira l'univers d'épouvante et d'horreur.

The same voice apparently shouted: "*Diable! combien donc aurait-il d'enfants!*"

On May 7, 1717, Peter the Great arrived in Paris and was lodged at the Hôtel des Lesdiguières,[1] in the Rue de la Cerisau. Both the Duchesse de Berry and her mother were feverishly anxious that the illustrious traveller should recognise their importance by honouring them with a visit; but Peter, though gracious enough to the Regent, did not appear to consider that prince's wife and daughter worthy of any particular attention on his part, and several days passed without their desire being gratified. At length, in despair, the mortified princesses, took a step which was in flagrant violation of all the rules of etiquette, but which, nevertheless, proved effective. "The Duchesse d'Orléans," writes Dangeau, "returned yesterday from Montmartre,[2] where she had been since Thursday, and sent M. de Saint-Pierre, her first equerry, to compliment the Czar, who answered that he would visit her to thank her. The Duchesse de Berry did likewise, and received the same answer."[3]

[1] The Hôtel des Lesdiguières had been built by the celebrated financier Sebastien Zamet, from whose heirs it was purchased by Bonne, Duc des Lesdiguières and Constable of France.

[2] The Abbey of Montmartre, where the Duchesse d'Orléans had an apartment, and to which she was frequently in the habit of retiring for a few days.

[3] *Journal*, May 19, 1717.

The Czar's visit to the latter took place on May 21, and the anonymous author of the *Gazette de la Régence*, who claims to have been present, gives the following account of the interview:

"The same day (Friday), Madame de Berry returned expressly from La Muette to receive, at the Luxembourg, the Czar, who arrived at three o'clock, and was received by the duchess in her ante-chamber. His Majesty kissed Madame de Berry on both cheeks. She gave him her right hand, and conducted him into her state-chamber, where stood two arm-chairs. They remained there a quarter of an hour, and then the Czar went to view the gardens. I saw all this ceremony with mine own eyes, although there were very few people there. Madame de Berry looked as stout as a tower, although in other respects beautiful and youthful."

The writer had certainly some excuse for describing the Duchesse de Berry as "stout as a tower." From her childhood the princess had shown a marked tendency to *embonpoint*, and, as she grew older, she became so stout that her figure was completely spoiled. At the same time, her complexion, hitherto one of her chief attractions, changed to a most unbecoming shade of red, despite the frequent bleedings to which she had recourse in order to remedy it. These operations, Dangeau tells us, had to be performed in the feet, since the surgeon was quite unable to find the vein in her arm. By the spring of 1717, the princess's generous proportions had begun to cause her serious inconvenience. The active life she had always led was no longer possible, and she decided to sell all her saddle-horses, since she was obliged to renounce following the chase except in her *calèche*, and even a quiet

PETER THE GREAT, EMPEROR OF RUSSIA

From the painting by Nattier, at Versailles

(Photo by W. A. Mansell & Co.)

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canter in the Bois de Boulogne could not be indulged in without discomfort.

For this distressing condition of affairs her intemperance at table seems to have been mainly responsible. Not only did she habitually drink to excess, but she was also a most inveterate gourmand. "It is impossible for her to be in good health with her frightful gluttony," writes *Madame*. "Every evening she sits down to table at eight or nine o'clock, and eats till three o'clock in the morning." And again: "Madame de Berry eats little at midday; but how can she be expected to make a proper meal? While still in bed, she devours all kinds of cakes. She never rises before midday, sits down to table at two o'clock, and eats little. At three o'clock, she rises from table, and does not walk a step. At four o'clock, they bring her all kinds of eatables: salad, cheese-cakes, fruit. She sups at ten o'clock in the evening, and remains at table until midnight. At one or two o'clock, she goes to bed, and, for a digestive, she drinks very strong brandy."[1]

The beginning of the following autumn, which the Duchesse de Berry was spending at La Muette, was marked by a veritable revolution of the palace. Desiring to give Rion a still more signal proof of her solicitude for his interests than any which she had yet bestowed upon him, and of having greater opportunities for enjoying his society, she determined to create him her first equerry. This charge was at present exercised by the Marquis d'Hautefort, a nobleman whom she dared not go so far as to dismiss; and she accordingly determined to evade the difficulty by doubling the office and having two first

[1] Letters of April 2, 1719, and November 18, 1717.

equerries. At the same time, partly to reward Madame de Mouchy for her confidential services, but more to mask the promotion of her lover, she determined to double the charge of *dame d'atours* as well. This creation was allowed to take place without provoking any observation from the Duc d'Orléans. But it aroused the keenest resentment in the Duchesse de Berry's Household ; and two of her *dames de compagnie*, Madame de Clermont and Madame de Beauvau, indignant at the idea of a woman who had never filled any official charge about the person of the princess becoming all of a sudden their superior, demanded an audience of the Regent, and, after complaining bitterly of the promotion of Madame de Mouchy, concerning whom they expressed themselves in far from complimentary terms, resigned their posts. Nor did they make any effort to conceal from the Court their reasons for this action, which was generally approved.

The Duchesse de Berry, in consequence, was deeply incensed, and her anger was sensibly augmented by the fact that both ladies continued to be well received by her father and mother at the Palais-Royal, who thus tacitly acknowledged that they had justice on their side. One evening, in the following April, the princess happened to be at the Opera, when she perceived Madame de Clermont, with the Duchesse d'Étampes, in the box of the Comte de Toulouse, which was exactly opposite hers. No sooner did she catch sight of her former *dame de campagnie*, than her florid countenance assumed an even deeper colour, and, turning to one of her guards, who was on duty, she sent him to Madame de Clermont, with a peremptory order to withdraw on the instant and never

again to show herself in her Royal Highness's presence. Madame de Clermont obeyed, and left the Opera-house, accompanied by the Duchesse d'Étampes ; but the whole nobility was transported with indignation at the pretensions of a princess to banish one of their number from her presence in a public place—a right which belonged to the King alone.

The Regent spoke to his daughter, as did *Madame,* and advised her to make the *amende honorable;* but the princess refused. However, the very hostile criticisms of which she continued to be the object eventually convinced her of the necessity of yielding ; and, after a consultation with Madame de Saint-Simon, to whom she was ready enough to turn in moments of embarrassment, she decided to be reconciled to Mesdames de Clermont and de Beauvau. It was accordingly arranged that she should go and spend a couple of days in her apartment at the Carmelites, and that, while she was there, the two ladies and their husbands, accompanied by Madame de Saint-Simon, should pay her a visit. The princess, who, as we have said, could be perfectly charming when she wished to please, received them most graciously, and the reconciliation was complete.

The Duchesse de Berry was far from satisfied with what she had already done for Rion ; her infatuation increased every day, and she thought only of finding new means of pleasing him. He had expressed a desire for a government, and in November, 1717, she persuaded her father to purchase from its holder, M. de Saint-Viance, the rich government of Cognac, and to confer it upon her idol, with, we need hardly say, exemption from residing there.

But let us leave the Duchesse de Berry for a while, and turn to the second of the Regent's daughters, Louise Adelaïde d'Orléans, who had now abandoned the title of Mlle. de Chartres for that of Mlle. d'Orléans, which, it will be remembered, her elder sister had once borne.

CHAPTER VII

Mlle. d'Orléans at the Abbey of Chelles—She announces her intention of taking the veil—Attitude of her relatives towards this project—She falls ill and is removed, on the advice of the doctors, to the Abbey of Montmartre—Unfounded report that she has decided to renounce her religious aspirations—Project of the Duchesse d'Orléans to marry her to the Prince de Dombes, eldest son of the Duc du Maine—Mlle. d'Orléans appears in Society—Her portrait by *Madame*—The singer Cauchereau—M. de Saint-Maixent—Mlle. d'Orléans persists in her desire to enter religion—Futile efforts of her mother to coerce her into marrying the Prince de Dombes—The Regent refuses to sanction the princess becoming a nun—The latter, having obtained permission to visit Chelles, announces her determination to remain there—The Duc d'Orléans endeavours to prevail upon her to renounce this resolve, but she remains inflexible—She pronounces her vows—She intrigues against the abbess, Madame de Villars, who is compelled to resign her post—Mlle. d'Orléans is nominated Abbess of Chelles—Her consecration.

THE Abbey of Chelles was, as we have seen, an infinitely more agreeable retreat than the majority of such institutions. Nevertheless, the monotonous and uniform life of the cloister was but ill-suited to a lively little girl not yet in her teens, and for some months Mlle. d'Orléans was far from happy. However, she was at an impressionable age and of a very receptive nature, and it was difficult for her to remain long in an atmosphere of devotion without becoming affected by it ; and gradually religious ideas began to take possession of her mind. The nuns, and in particular the kind and sympathetic prioress, Madame de Fretteville, perceiving the direction in which her thoughts were tending, did everything in their power to encourage her ; and at the end

of a year or two she did not conceal her intention of taking the veil.

The Duchesse d'Orléans, far from combating this project, approved it warmly ; it was, indeed, with this idea that she had insisted on sending Mlle. d'Orléans and Mlle. de Valois to Chelles ; while her husband, with his usual indifference, shrugged his shoulders, and observed that if the girl wished to become a nun, he supposed she must have her way. *Madame*, on the contrary, showed herself strongly opposed to her granddaughter's inclination. " She wishes to become a nun," she writes, " which displeases me and delights her mother ; but I am very sure that every one will end by repenting of it. I have done all I can ; there would certainly be many things to say about that, but which cannot be entrusted to the post."[1]

It was believed that the death of Louis XIV. and the accession of her father to the Regency produced a sudden change in the projects of Mlle. de Chartres, and that the good seed sown in the convent was suddenly checked by the thorns of ambition ; by the desire, now that her father had become head of the State and heir-presumptive to the throne, to assume the place in the world to which her rank entitled her, and perhaps to make a great marriage. This belief was engendered by the fact that very shortly afterwards the young princess was taken ill, and on the advice of the doctors who attended her, removed from Chelles to the Abbey of Montmartre, whence she emerged every morning to spend the day with her parents at the Palais-Royal. People attributed her

[1] *Lettres de la Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé), Letter of July 15, 1715.

illness to the distaste which she had conceived for conventual life, and to mortification at the reluctance of her parents to permit her to return to the world; and regarded her removal to Montmartre as preparatory to a complete renunciation of her determination to enter religion. "It is said that she has changed the intention that she had of becoming a nun," writes Dangeau on October 17, 1715.

Public opinion did Mlle. d'Orléans an injustice. It was not her views which had changed, but those of her parents, or rather of her mother. In consequence of recent political events, the duchess, always devoted to the interests of her favourite brother, the Duc du Maine, was keenly desirous of bringing about a reconciliation between that prince and the Regent; and the easiest way to effect this was a marriage between one of her daughters and the duke's eldest son, the Prince de Dombes. Mlle. d'Orléans, being two years older than her next sister, Mlle. de Valois, who, having failed to show the slightest inclination for the religious life, had been withdrawn from Chelles at the beginning of August 1714, was the more suitable wife for her nephew; and she was now as anxious to dissuade the girl from carrying out her pious resolutions as she had once been ready to confirm her in them.

With this idea, she sought to present the world to the young recluse under its most pleasing aspects, and to prepare her for the position which she intended her to fill in it. She had her taught dancing and music; she took her to the "Comédie," to the Opera and to balls, even to the Opera-ball, where she appeared twice during the winter of 1716. The princess appeared delighted with

these unaccustomed pleasures and pursuits, and was particularly enthusiastic about music, which she studied under the direction of Cauchereau, the celebrated tenor of the Opera.

Although the Duchesse d'Orléans had not yet shown her hand, in the last weeks of 1715 a rumour spread that her second daughter was shortly to be married ; and, indeed, it seemed very improbable that, if she had definitely decided to renounce the convent, the young princess would remain long unwed. For Mlle. d'Orléans, now in her seventeenth year, was undoubtedly a very charming and accomplished girl ; and the correspondence of *Madame*, usually so critical of her relatives, is full of her praises. The old lady describes her as " very agreeable in person, tall, graceful, with a pleasing countenance, a pretty mouth and teeth white as pearls,[1] beautiful hands, and a dazzling complexion." She adds that she dances well, thoroughly understands music, has an agreeable voice, and can sing at sight anything that she is asked to " without making grimaces," has a " natural eloquence " and a very good disposition, " is fond of everything that she ought to be fond of ; and declares that she " loves her tenderly, which is not difficult to do, for she certainly deserves it."[2] And in another letter, dated August 12, 1716, *Madame* writes : " She firmly persists in becoming a nun, but I do not think that she has any vocation for it, for she has all the tastes of a boy : she loves dogs, horses, hunting, and shooting ; she fears

[1] Letters of January 16, 1716 and March 31, 1718.

[2] Elsewhere *Madame* writes : " I have never in my life seen more beautiful teeth. They are like pearls which have just been taken out of a jewel-case."

nothing in the world, and cares not at all for those things which women love. She does not trouble in the least about her appearance, although she is not ugly and is well-made." From which it will be gathered that Mlle. d'Orléans was a young lady of a very independent turn of mind.

To explain the supposed return of Mlle. d'Orléans to religious ideas, from which, as a matter of fact, she had never departed, the gossiping chroniclers of the time relate two anecdotes, neither of which appears to rest upon any serious foundation.

One is that she had conceived too warm an admiration for the talents of her singing-master, Cauchereau, "who possessed intelligence and an agreeable countenance,"[1] and that one evening, when she visited the Opera, with her mother, to witness a representation of Lulli's *Atys*, and the popular tenor was surpassing himself in the rendering of a very passionate *morceau*, she cried out, in an ecstasy of emotion: "*Ah! mon cher Cauchereau!*" and then, overcome by emotion, swooned away in the box. Whereupon the Duchesse d'Orléans, who "found her daughter's exclamation a little too expressive,"[2] forthwith decided that the convent was the only safe place for her.

The other is that she fell deeply in love with the Chevalier de Saint-Maixent, one of the King's pages, who had saved her from an accident at the chase, at the cost of an injury which nearly proved fatal, and did everything in her power to persuade her parents to allow her to marry him; and that, when they very naturally refused

[1] Duclos, *Chroniques indiscrètes sur la Régence.*
[2] *Ibid.*

to countenance so startling a *mésalliance*, the desire of taking the veil returned to her.

Facts, as the princess's most authoritative biographer is at pains to show,[1] absolutely contradict these romantic incidents. Never had Mlle. d'Orléans renounced her projects. If, in October 1715, Dangeau records in his *Journal* the rumour that she had changed her intentions, on December 23 he mentions that "she persists in becoming a nun"; and from that time he scarcely ever refers to her without insisting on the perseverance of her vocation. Thus, on February 26, 1716, he observes: "She persists in the desire of becoming a nun and appears more than ever in devotion." And a few days later (March 3), after recording her presence at the Opera-ball, he adds: "Despite all the amusements that they give her, she persists in wishing to be a nun." On her side, *Madame* is not less explicit. "She persists in wishing to be a nun," she writes on August 12, 1716.

What, however, if it did not influence her decision, undoubtedly precipitated the entry of Mlle. d'Orléans into religion, was the pressure brought to bear upon her by her mother to induce her to wed the Prince de Dombes. The Duchesse d'Orléans employed every imaginable persuasion to obtain the princess's consent to this cherished project; but the latter, who did not feel the least inclination for the husband chosen for her, and was secretly encouraged in her resistance by *Madame*, who detested everything which savoured of bastardy, was firm in her refusal. Finding persuasion of no avail, the angry duchess determined to overcome the girl's obstinacy by other means, and, while caressing her third daughter,

[1] Édouard de Barthélemy, *les Filles du Régent*.

Mlle. de Valois, whom, in default of her sister, she intended to marry to the Prince de Dombes, treated Mlle. d'Orléans so harshly that her position speedily became intolerable, and she entreated the Regent to allow her to take the veil with the least possible delay. "What induced the poor demoiselle d'Orléans to become a nun," writes *Madame*, "is simply the little affection she experienced from her mother, and her fear that she would be tormented in order to make her marry the eldest son of the Duc du Maine. She preferred to retire from the world than to risk drawing upon her all her mother's hatred."[1]

Philippe d'Orléans had raised no objection to his second daughter's project, when it had been first announced, some two or three years before; but, since her return to Paris, he had become attached to the girl, and now endeavoured to prevail upon her to renounce it. He hoped to find in marriage an argument against the tenacity with which she clung to her vocation, but no prince presented himself capable of arousing in her even a passing interest.

At length, at the beginning of the autumn of 1716, Mlle. d'Orléans, finding that her father still refused to give his consent, determined to dispense with it. She was then staying with her mother and grandmother at Saint-Cloud, and one evening demanded permission to pay a visit to her old friends at the Abbey of Chelles. *Madame* had her suspicions, but the Duchesse d'Orléans did not share them, and granted her daughter's request. Early next morning (September 14), the princess set out for Chelles, accompanied by her *sous-gouvernante*, Madame des

[1] Letter of October 9, 1718.

Bordes, who was to bring her back the same evening. But Madame des Bordes returned alone, bringing with her a letter from her charge addressed to her relatives, in which she informed them that " it had always been her intention to become a nun at Chelles, and that, being more determined upon it than ever, she had decided to remain there and never leave the convent again."[1] A letter of *Madame*, written some four years later, has preserved for us the details of this incident.

" Never have I seen the abbess [Mlle. d'Orléans] more light-hearted than the day on which she took this resolution and announced it to her family. She had been for a ride on horseback with her sister [Mlle. de Valois], and had not for a long time been so amused, at any rate in appearance. At eight o'clock in the evening, she came to my apartments with her mother, and we played cards until supper-time. After supper, I proposed to play again, but Madame d'Orléans asked me to go into her cabinet, and Mlle. d'Orléans followed us there. This young lady, falling on her knees, begged us to allow her to go to Chelles, to perform her devotions there. I said to her : ' My daughter, one can perform one's devotions anywhere ; the place is a matter of perfect indifference ; the preparation of the soul is the essential thing.' But she remained on her knees and reiterated her entreaties. I said to her mother : ' Make up your mind ; do you wish your daughter to go to Chelles or not ? ' Madame d'Orléans replied : ' She cannot be prevented from going there to perform her devotions.' Accordingly, on the morrow, at seven o'clock in the morning, the young lady set out thither, and immediately sent back her

[1] *Journal de Dangeau*, September 14, 1716.

carriage, with a letter addressed to her father, her mother, and myself, wherein she took leave of us and informed us of her resolve not to leave this convent again."[1]

According to *Madame*, the Duchesse d'Orléans received the news with equanimity; doubtless, she had by this time recognised the futility of attempting to coerce her daughter into accepting the husband she desired to impose upon her, and considered that the girl's retirement into a convent would free her from a good deal of unwelcome responsibility. The Regent, on the contrary, was very angry, indeed, and on the following morning set off for Chelles in a post-chaise, in the hope of persuading the fugitive to return. His arguments, however, were powerless to shake the latter's resolution, and she even seized the occasion to admonish her father very severely on the scandalous life he was leading, which, she declared, was one of the principal reasons which had determined her to enter religion.

For more than four months after the return of Mlle. d'Orléans to Chelles, the Regent firmly refused to authorise his daughter taking any further steps towards her vocation; but, at length, towards the end of the following March, he consented to her entering the noviciate. The young lady lost no time in availing herself of the permission so tardily accorded, and a few days later (March 31, 1717) she took the habit, in the presence of her father and mother. "Her behaviour was firm and edifying," writes Saint-Simon, "and everything passed off before as few persons as possible and with the utmost simplicity."

The Duc d'Orléans gave the illustrious novice a pen-

[1] Letter of September 15, 1723.

sion of 10,000 livres and a further sum to be expended in alms and oblations.

Notwithstanding that he had, to all appearance, surrendered to his daughter's wishes, the Regent was, in reality, very far from reconciled to her retirement from the world, and at the beginning of September he reappeared at Chelles and made another attempt to induce her to renounce her resolution; but to no purpose. Towards the end of the same month, Mlle. d'Orléans received a visit from the Duchesse de Berry, who came charged with a commission from the Duc d'Orléans to persuade her sister to allow herself to be nominated Abbess of Montmartre, on which condition she would be authorised to pronounce her vows forthwith. It is not clear what object the Regent had in making this proposal, unless it was to have his daughter as near him as possible and under the eye of the Duchesse d'Orléans, who had an apartment at Montmartre, to which she was in the habit of frequently retiring. But Mlle. d'Orléans naturally foresaw incessant difficulties from the proximity of her mother, and she, with well-assumed modesty, declined the offer, on the ground that " before thinking of commanding, it was necessary for her to learn how to obey."

In the first days of 1718, the Duc d'Orléans came again to Chelles, only to find his daughter " persisting still in her desire to be a nun," as did *Madame*, who paid her a visit some weeks later. The novice earnestly entreated the latter to use her influence with the Regent to secure permission for her to pronounce her vows after Easter, and to this *Madame* appears to have given a reluctant consent; any way, on April 20, the Duc

d'Orléans authorised his daughter to make her profession as soon as she had completed her twentieth year, that is to say, in the following August. It is worthy of remark that the young lady was so fearful of her father changing his mind that nothing would content her but a permission written and signed by him. Nevertheless, the Regent had not yet abandoned all hope, and on July 19 he arrived at Chelles, accompanied by the Archbishop of Paris, the Cardinal de Noailles, to make a supreme effort to overcome the resolution of Mlle. d'Orléans. But he found her, if possible, more inflexible than ever, and, as in the face of the solemn promises he had made her, he felt unable to offer any further opposition, the taking of the veil was fixed for August 20.

"Mademoiselle," writes Dangeau, "made her profession at Chelles, and edified every one by the devotion, the courage, and the joy which she displayed on this occasion.[1] She resisted *Madame's* letters and the entreaties which M. Terrat[2] addressed to her on behalf of the Duc d'Orléans."

The ceremony was performed by the Cardinal de Noailles, who profited by the occasion to deliver a discourse which "greatly edified the illustrious persons who heard him." These illustrious persons did not include any member of the Orléans family, the duke absenting himself from annoyance; *Madame*, because she "did not desire to be distressed to the point of tears,"[3] and the

[1] *Madame* had continued her efforts up to the last moment. In a letter written on the day of the ceremony she says that she had made to her granddaughter "all the representations that she had been able to imagine to turn her from this bad resolution."

[2] Chancellor of the Duc d'Orléans.

[3] Letter of September 6, 1718.

duchess and her daughters, because apparently it was too much trouble for them to make the journey.

The Regent, however, behaved very liberally, in view of the fact that his daughter had acted in direct opposition to his wishes. He sent to the abbey a sum of 100,000 livres for the dowry of the illustrious nun, gave the latter 30,000 to dispense in alms, and continued her pension of 10,000 livres.

Saint-Simon accuses Mlle. d'Orléans of having adopted the religious life "through ill-humour, childishness and caprice," and the charge is repeated by several historians who have followed him. In this, however, they do the princess a grave injustice, for, as we have seen, her resolve to enter religion was one which dated from the time of her first sojourn at Chelles, and in which she had stubbornly persisted ever since, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition she had had to encounter. Without doubt, the ill-advised efforts of her mother to force her into a marriage with the Prince de Dombes, and her distress at the dissipated life led by her father and at the still more scandalous conduct of her elder sister, served to confirm this resolve, and to hasten her retirement to the cloister, where she hoped to find peace and security. But, even if her relatives had been all that could be desired, we see no reason to suppose that she would have been content to remain in the world, for everything points to a religious vocation incontestably serious.

Mlle. d'Orléans would appear, therefore, to have entered—or rather re-entered—the Abbey of Chelles with the most sincere convictions and with an earnest desire to do her duty humbly and faithfully in the life to which she felt herself called. But she did not continue long

in this laudable resolution, for, even with the best intentions, it was very difficult for a young woman of her independence of character, and, moreover, a Princess of the Blood, to render for any length of time that implicit obedience demanded from subordinate members of a religious community. "So long as she had been obliged to struggle," writes one of her biographers, "the religious thought dominated her, by absorbing all other sentiments; but, from the day when the princess had triumphed over all obstacles, from the day when the grating of the cloister had fallen for ever upon her, in placing an insurmountable barrier between the world and her, a secret movement perhaps introduced itself into her mind, which inspired her with the desire to recover a little of the power which she was losing by her renunciation."[1] In fact, after a few months of retreat, Sœur Sainte-Bathilde, by which name the princess was now known, revealed herself as ambitious, restless and dissatisfied, with a marked tendency towards Jansenism, and with an affection for worldly things which positively horrified the more devout sisters. "She was unable to remain except as ruler," writes Saint-Simon, with only too much justice this time, "in the place to which she had come in order to obey."

The Abbess of Chelles was, as we have mentioned in a previous chapter, Madame de Villars, an estimable woman, but exceedingly tenacious of her dignity and a stern disciplinarian. For these reasons she was very far from popular with a section of the community, particularly among those who held Jansenist views, which were anathema to the abbess, a lady of the most rigid

[1] Édouard de Barthélemy, *les Filles du Régent.*

orthodoxy; and nothing would have better pleased these malcontents than to see their superior translated to some other sphere of usefulness. Of that, however, there seemed little probability, and the malcontents were obliged to resign themselves to her domination with the best grace they could assume, until the arrival of the young princess in their midst offered them a means of escape. Perceiving the growing dissatisfaction of the new recluse with the humble position which she occupied, they skilfully exploited it, and laboured incessantly to inspire her with ambitious ideas, and persuade her that the first place at Chelles was the only one compatible with her illustrious birth. In this little conspiracy they had the active assistance of Père Ledoux, the almoner of the abbey, a learned Benedictine, but an ardent Jansenist; and in a surprisingly short time the scruples of the princess vanished, and she allowed herself to become the leader of a party whose avowed object was to drive Madame de Villars into surrendering her post in favour of a girl of twenty-one.

The abbess, becoming suspicious, sent for Sœur Sainte-Bathilde and questioned her closely. The latter, not yet ready for open hostilities, endeavoured to dissipate her suspicions by making jest of the rumours which had reached the reverend Mother's ears. But she had counted without her allies, who desired to hasten matters, and began to conduct themselves in a manner which left no doubt as to their intentions. In a few weeks the convent, ordinarily so peaceful, was in a veritable ferment. The abbess, sustained by the elder nuns, endeavoured to assert her authority; but the younger members of the community were in full revolt, and the situation speedily

became so intolerable that she decided to abandon the struggle.

On March 26, 1719—that is to say, only seven months after Mlle. d'Orléans had taken her vows—Dangeau writes in his *Journal:* "People are beginning to say that the Abbess of Chelles, who is sister of the Maréchal de Villars, will resign her abbey, and that Mlle. d'Orléans, who is a nun in that house, will become abbess. I even believe that some steps have already been taken with the Pope to obtain the bulls."

On April 12, the same chronicler records that the Duc d'Orléans, accompanied by the Cardinal de Noailles, had gone to Chelles, and that every one believed that *Mademoiselle* had been declared abbess, while Madame de Villars was receiving a retiring pension of 12,000 livres. "This is not yet settled," he adds, "but there is every appearance that it soon will be."

The affair had, in point of fact, been decided that same day. Madame de Villars had agreed to resign her post, and had accepted a pension of the amount stated and a lodging at the Abbey of Panthémont, near her brother's hôtel, by way of compensation; Mlle. d'Orléans was to become abbess in her stead, as soon as the necessary formalities could be completed, and, in the meantime, to avoid any further friction with the retiring superior, "whose haughtiness," says *Madame,* "she was unable to support," she was to retire to the Val-de-Grâce. She arrived there on April 21, where she was visited by the Duchesse d'Orléans, who had consistently supported Madame de Villars, because the Maréchal de Villars was one of the most devoted partisans of the Duc du Maine, and was furious at her daughter's victory. A most vio-

lent scene followed. "She [the Duchesse d'Orléans] said that she would never pardon her daughter for having arranged with the duke, unknown to her, to become abbess. The nun replied that, since her mother had always taken the part of the late abbess against her, she had not confided to her the secret, because she would have opposed it. Then the mother began to weep bitterly, and declared that she was very unhappy with her husband and children; that her husband was the most unjust man in the world, since he kept in captivity his brother-in-law,[1] the best and most pious man in the world—a saint—and that God would punish him. The daughter having replied that respect imposed silence upon her, the mother became still more furious."[2]

In the second week in May, Madame de Villars quitted Chelles, upon which the nuns immediately proceeded to elect Mlle. d'Orléans in her place, and a courier was despatched to Rome to obtain the bulls of confirmation. These reached Paris in the middle of June, but owing to a family bereavement, of which we shall speak in the succeeding chapter, the consecration of the new abbess did not take place until September 14.[3] *Madame*, who

[1] On December 29, 1718, the Duc du Maine had been arrested for his share in the Cellamare conspiracy, and imprisoned in the Château of Doullens.

[2] *Correspondance complète de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans*, Letter of May 5, 1718.

[3] Mlle. d'Orléans—or, rather, Madame d'Orléans, as she was now called in the world—had, however, returned to Chelles on June 25, escorted by her sister, Mlle. de Valois, and Madame d'Épinay, one of her mother's ladies-in-waiting, whom Dangeau tells us she "entertained to supper and a display of fireworks" (!). The same chronicler relates, under date August 14, that she had been joined by Mlle. de la Roche-sur-Yon, daughter of the Princesse de Conti, who, having obtained permission to come to Chelles, on the pretext of paying a visit to the new abbess, had sent back word that she intended to remain there and

assisted at this ceremony, which was invested with all the pomp imaginable, has left us an interesting account of it:

"I promised to give you an account of my journey to Chelles. I started on Thursday, at seven o'clock, with the Duchesse de Brancas, Madame de Chasteautier and Madame de Ratzamhausen; and arrived at half-past ten. My grandson, the Duc de Chartres, had already arrived; my son arrived a quarter of an hour later, and then Mlle. de Valois. Madame d'Orléans had caused herself to be bled for the express purpose of not coming. She and the abbess are not very good friends, and, besides, her extreme indolence would have prevented her from incommoding herself and rising a little early. We went to the church; the abbess's *prie-Dieu* was placed in the choir of the nuns; it was draped with violet velvet covered all over with gold *fleurs-de-lis;* my *prie-Dieu* was against the balustrade; my son and daughter[1] were behind the pulpit, for the Princes of the Blood may not kneel on my carpet, that being a right reserved for the grandsons of France. All the King's musicians were in the tribune; the Cardinal de Noailles celebrated Mass. The altar is very beautiful; it is formed of black and white marble. There are four statues of white marble representing saintly abbesses, and one bears so striking a resemblance to our abbess that one would believe that it was her portrait. It was, however, made before my granddaughter was born, for she is only twenty-one

become a nun. However, the young lady's resolution failed her after a few days, and, in response to the maternal entreaties, she consented to return home.

[1] Charlotte Élisabeth d'Orléans, wife of Leopold I., Duke of Lorraine.

years old. Twelve monks of her Order [the Benedictine], wearing superb chasubles, came to serve Mass. After the cardinal had read the Epistle, the Master of the Ceremonies entered the choir of the nuns and brought back the abbess. She came, looking exceedingly well, followed by two abbesses and half a dozen nuns of her convent ; made a low reverence to the altar and to myself, and knelt before the cardinal, who was seated in a great arm-chair before the altar. They brought, with due ceremony, the confession of faith, which she read, and after the cardinal had recited a number of prayers, he gave her a book, which contained the rules of her convent. She then returned to her place, and when they had read the *Credo* and the offertory, she came to the offering, accompanied by the abbesses and her nuns. They brought for the offering two large candles and two loaves, one of which was gilt and the other silver. After the cardinal had communicated, she returned to kneel before him, and he gave her the cross. He reconducted her to her seat, not to her *prie-Dieu*, but to her abbess's seat, which was a kind of throne, surmounted by a Princess of the Blood's daïs, covered with *fleurs-de-lis*. As soon as she was seated, the trumpets and the hautboys sounded, and the cardinal, followed by all his priests, placed himself by the altar on the left side, his cross in his hand, and they sang the *Te Deum*. All the nuns then arrived two by two, and approached to show their submission to their abbess, by making her a low reverence. That reminded me of the honours which were paid to Atys, when they made him high-priest of Cybele, for they also came two by two to salute him. I thought that they were going to sing, as in the opera. After the

Te Deum we entered the convent, and at half an hour after midday we sat down to table, my son, my grandson the Duc de Chartres, the Princesse Victoire de Soissons, the young demoiselle d'Auvergne, daughter of the Duc d'Albret, and the three ladies who were with me. The abbess placed herself by my side in her refectory, at a table of forty covers, with her sister Mlle. de Valois, the two ladies who accompanied her, twelve abbesses, and all the other nuns of the convent. It was amusing to see all the black robes round the table. My son's people served a very splendid repast, and the populace was allowed to pillage the dessert and the sweetmeats after dinner was over."

CHAPTER VIII

Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine to Paris—Magnificent fête in their honour at the Luxembourg—An unbidden guest—Attentions paid by the Duchesse de Berry to the Duchess of Lorraine—Reconciliation between *Madame* and her granddaughter—Alteration in the latter's conduct towards her mother—She "greatly edifies" the Carmelites during the Holy Week of 1718—Fêtes in honour of the Duchesse de Berry at Chantilly—Ungracious behaviour of the princess—She resumes her effort to usurp the honours of a queen—Indignation of the public—Protests of the Corps Diplomatique—She becomes enceinte—Her efforts to conceal her condition—She gives birth to a daughter, and her life is in serious danger—Refusal of the Sacraments by the curé of Saint-Sulpice and the Cardinal de Noailles—The princess recovers—Her secret marriage with Rion—Consideration of the question whether this event took place before or after her illness.

AT the beginning of 1718, Leopold I. of Lorraine, who had married the Regent's sister, Charlotte Élisabeth d'Orléans, came to Paris, to render homage to Louis XV. for his duchy of Bar. He was accompanied by his wife and also by his mistress, Madame de Craon, a lady upon whom *Madame* makes some piquant observations in her letters to her German friends. The Duchesse de Berry showed herself extremely attentive to the distinguished visitors. On their arrival, she placed in the duchess's chamber at the Palais-Royal a superb commode, filled with scarves, aprons, handkerchiefs, fichus and ribbons, "with a *déshabillé* and every other similar kind of present"; she entertained them to dinner and supper, and on February 28 she gave in their honour, at the Luxembourg, a fête which surpassed in prodigal splen-

dour anything which Paris had witnessed for years, and to a description of which the *Nouveau Mercure* consecrated a considerable part of its February and March numbers.[1]

" It was of an extraordinary magnificence and admirably arranged," writes Dangeau. " There was a table of one hundred and twenty-five covers for the ladies, and other tables for at least as many men. The Princes of the Blood supped at the ladies' table. The ladies who supped with the Duchesse de Berry were all magnificently dressed, and she had even requested those who were in mourning to lay it aside for that day. M. de Lorraine did not take his rank, but sat down to supper among the ladies, to preserve his incognito. The Palais du Luxembourg was splendidly illuminated both within and without, and a more superb and better ordered fête had never been seen. All who were present say marvellous things about it."

This sumptuous fête did not pass off without one of

[1] The sumptuousness and variety of the menu was such that the editor was inspired to describe it in verse :

" Des filets minces d'aloyau,
Des gendarmes au jus de veau,
Petits dindons aux ciboulettes,
Et des anchois en allumettes,
Poulets de grains, mets excellent,
Cuits derrière le pot cassant,
Pigeon au soleil, chose exquise,
Des côtelettes en surprise, etc."

We are also informed that the first course consisted of 31 kinds of soup, 60 entrées, and 132 *hors d'œuvres ;* the second and third of 132 hot side-dishes and 60 cold ; the dessert, or the fruit, as it was called at this period, of 100 baskets of fresh fruit, 94 of dried fruits, 50 salvers of iced fruit, and 106 *compôtes ;* that the dishes and plates were carried by 200 Swiss, and that 132 lackeys were commissioned to keep the glasses of the company filled.

those scandals which seem to have been inseparable from everything which the Duchesse de Berry did. During supper, the princess was informed that four persons who had not been invited, "and were not fit to be," had boldly installed themselves at the men's table. One of them was a certain Foucault de Magny, an eccentric personage, "mad with vanity," who, after being dismissed from the intendancy of Caen, for "many and gross knaveries,"[1] had lately purchased from the Baron de Breteuil the post of introducer of the Ambassadors, in virtue of which office he appears to have considered himself invited to the fête.[2] Highly indignant, the princess despatched Saumery, her first *maître-d'hôtel*, to order the intruders to retire immediately. Three of them obeyed, and withdrew without making any disturbance; but "M. de Magny received the reprimand very ill, and answered M. de Saumery so insolently that the latter seized him by the cravat to conduct him to the Duchesse de Berry."[3] A violent scuffle ensued, which ended in Magny wrenching himself free and effecting his escape from the Luxembourg. Next day, he expressed himself in such vigorous terms in regard to the Duchesse de Berry, that the princess applied for a *lettre de cachet*, and before night M. de Magny found himself in the Bastille. He only remained there until March 12, when he was set at

[1] Saint-Simon.

[2] The Ambassadors had been duly invited, but they did not go, since their pretension to sit at the same table as the Princes of the Blood was not admitted. Had they attended, Magny would, of course, have accompanied them, and he might, therefore, claim to have been included in their invitation. The Duchesse de Berry's orders to him to withdraw were, no doubt, the result of her annoyance at the refusal of the Ambassadors to grace her fête with their presence.

[3] Dangeau, February 28, 1718.

liberty, at the request of the duchess; but he received orders to resign his post as introducer of the Ambassadors, and altogether appears to have found his supper at the Luxembourg a somewhat costly repast.

The Duc and Duchesse de Lorraine remained in Paris until April 8, and the Duchesse de Berry continued her attentions to them up to the end; indeed, on the night before their departure, notwithstanding that the Duchesse de Lorraine had paid her a formal farewell visit some hours before, she went to the Palais-Royal to embrace her aunt once more. In acting thus, the princess was seeking to please *Madame*, who was devoted to her daughter. She had lately come to the conclusion that she had committed a grave error in alienating her grandmother, in view of the affection which the Regent entertained for the latter and the not inconsiderable influence which she enjoyed; and she had eagerly seized so favourable an opportunity of recovering her good graces. Her pains were not wasted. "I am very satisfied with my granddaughter," writes the old princess, "she has behaved very well towards my children of Lorraine. She has sense, and manifests an inclination to return to religion and a disgust of vice. I trust that God will have compassion upon her and will accord her the grace of a sincere conversion."[1]

The Duchesse de Berry did not fail to follow up her success, and the affection and respect she showed for her grandmother appear quite to have won the old lady's heart. "She conducts herself very well towards me," she writes at the end of May, "and forgets nothing to show her affection. I love her sincerely." And three

[1] Letter of March 31, 1718.

weeks later: "I should be very ungrateful if I had no attachment for her, for she testifies the greatest possible affection for me, and often shows me so much attention that I am quite touched."[1]

For some time past, too, the Duchesse de Berry's conduct towards her mother had shown a marked improvement, and when, in March, 1718, the Duchesse d'Orléans was taken somewhat seriously ill, she became quite a devoted daughter. She discontinued her card-parties at the Luxembourg, installed herself at the Palais-Royal, and nursed the sick woman "with all the zeal of a *sœur grise*."[2] "It would be impossible," writes Dangeau, "to testify more affection and attachment than the Duchesse de Berry has shown for her mother during this illness."[3]

This remarkable alteration in the conduct of the princess synchronized with outward manifestations of the most pronounced piety. She passed all the Holy Week of 1718 with the Carmelites of the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, and "greatly edified them. She received the Sacrament on the Thursday and the Friday; she fasted on bread and water."[4] In June, she returned to Paris from La Muette, where she was, as usual, spending the summer, for the solemnities of the Feast of Corpus Christi, and "edified all the public in the procession." She visited the Carmelites three times during the month of July; twice in August, and spent a week with them at the beginning of September. And yet all the time her *liaison* with Rion continued; indeed, their relations

[1] Letters of May 29 and June 21, 1718.
[2] *Madame*, Letter of June 21, 1718.
[3] Journal, March 22, 1718.
[4] Dangeau.

were, if possible, more open than ever. This apparently amazing inconsistency is, however, as we shall presently see, capable of a very simple explanation.

On August 26, 1718, a Bed of Justice was held, and a decree registered reducing the Duc du Maine and his younger brother, the Comte de Toulouse, from the rank of Princes of Blood to that of simple peers, and taking away from the latter the superintendence of the young King's education. The abolition of the monstrous privileges accorded by Louis XIV. to his natural sons gave the greatest satisfaction to the Princes of the Blood; and the Duc de Bourbon, desirous of showing his gratitude, thought that he could not do better than by giving a superb fête—or rather series of fêtes—in honour of the Duchesse de Berry at that magnificent château the embellishment of which had been one of the first cares of four generations of Condés.

The princess arrived at Chantilly in the evening of Sunday, September 25, accompanied by a Court of twenty-three ladies, who had been " nominated " by her, and, *bien entendu*, the Chevalier de Rion, and was received with sovereign honours. Immediately on her arrival, supper was served, *Monsieur le Duc* being the only man to have the privilege of sitting at the table of the Duchesse de Berry. Supper over, the company adjourned to the salon, where the card-tables had been set out, and play for very high stakes went on far into the night.

The following day was devoted to a walk in the gardens; and the Duc de Bourbon caused an agreeable surprise by distributing groups of musicians in different parts of the labyrinth, in the centre of which a sumptuous " colla-

tion" had been prepared. While this was being partaken of, unseen vocalists sang a cantatilla composed for the occasion by Cauchereau, in praise of the Duchesse de Berry, which must have been a welcome novelty to the princess who had so often excited the malicious wit of the *chansonniers*. In the evening, the card-tables again claimed the attention of the company, and there was also a grand concert, under the direction of Valette, the choirmaster of Senlis Cathedral. Tuesday was occupied by a stag-hunt; the *curée*[1] in the evening took place by the light of torches and fireworks.

On Wednesday, a visit was paid to *Monsieur le Duc's* menagerie, one of the finest private "zoos" in Europe, where the Duchesse de Berry was much interested by the sight of a full-grown lion playing with a bitch by whom he had been suckled when a cub.[2] In the evening, an Italian opera was performed, and was followed by a grand supper in the Galerie des Cerfs, which had been splendidly illuminated.

[1] The *curée* was the ceremony of throwing the entrails of the quarry to the hounds, who, after being loosed, were frequently called back by the *piqueurs*, in order to show how well disciplined and under what complete control they were. It was still in vogue in the time of Napoleon III. An interesting account of a *curée* at Compiègne in 1866 is given by Madame de Hegermann-Lindencrone in her recently published memoirs, *In the Courts of Memory* (Harpers).

[2] Apropos of this menagerie, an alarming incident occurred during the visit of the Duchesse de Berry to Chantilly. One day, while a number of the duke's guests were strolling about the gardens, a magnificent tiger, which had escaped from its cage, suddenly made its appearance upon the scene, to their unutterable consternation. Certain chroniclers assert that Rion bravely confronted the animal, and kept it at bay until its keeper arrived, when, surprised by the tumult its presence was occasioning, it allowed itself to be recaptured, and that this courageous act increased the passion of the princess for her favourite. But Saint-Simon says nothing about the chevalier, and ascribes the fortunate termination of what might have been a tragic affair to the presence of mind of the keeper.

The two following days were occupied by card-parties and another sumptuous supper; and on the Saturday there was a stag-hunt in the forest of Halatte, which continued after darkness had fallen, the Duc de Bourbon having caused wax-torches, "costing six livres apiece," to be attached to thirty thousand trees in the forest. On the Sunday, the company dispersed, and the Duchesse de Berry and her Court returned to Paris.

Despite the splendour of these fêtes, despite all the honours which were paid to her and the unceasing attentions not only of the Duc de Bourbon, but also of her old enemy, *Madame la Duchesse* the elder,[1] the Duchesse de Berry, if we are to believe Saint-Simon, behaved in a most ungracious fashion. "It would have been impossible for her," he says, "to be treated with more magnificence and more honour, or to have been entertained by a greater diversity of ingenious and charming fêtes, and it would have been impossible for her to receive the honours of which she was the object with more haughtiness and indifference, or to show more constraint and ennui. And he adds that, during the whole of her stay at Chantilly, she did not address a word to the young wife of the Duc de Bourbon (Marie Anne de Bourbon-Conti), because she refused to pardon her for having opposed, several years previously, the marriage of the Prince de Conti to Mlle. de Valois.

At the end of October, the Duchesse de Berry persuaded her father to allow her to exchange the Château of Am-

[1] In order to please the Duchesse de Berry, *Madame la Duchesse* commissioned her lover, or secret husband, the Marquis de Lassay, to take charge of Rion, and see that he had everything he required. A special table was assigned the favourite, and a carriage and relays of horses placed at his disposal.

boise, which had been assigned her as a country-residence by her marriage-contract, but which she had never cared to occupy, for that of Meudon, and lost no time in dismissing its governor, Du Mont, an old and valued servant of *Monseigneur*, and conferring the post upon Rion. Having installed herself at the Luxembourg for the winter, she began to affect more sovereign airs than ever, and on December 7, at a representation of the *Sémiramis* of Destouches, she repeated the attempt which she had made in the first months of the Regency to usurp the honours of a queen at the Opera. This time, she did not appear in a box, but engaged a part of the amphitheatre, which she caused to be railed off—" in order that the rest of the seats might not be confused with those which she had retained "[1]—and sat there, enthroned in an arm-chair placed upon an estrade, in the midst of a Court of some thirty ladies. The indignation which the renewal of the princess's pretensions aroused was increased by the inconvenience which this arrangement occasioned the public, and by the fact that the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans were present in their box, and thus appeared to authorise their daughter's enterprise.

The Duchesse de Berry did not dare to repeat this performance, but shortly afterwards she was guilty of a much more serious violation of established usage.

It was the custom for new Ambassadors, after presenting their credentials to the Regent, to go in state to the Luxembourg to salute the princess, as the first lady in the land. One day, having to receive the Venetian Ambassador, the Duchesse de Berry caused her arm-chair to be placed on an estrade of three steps—a right which

[1] Dangeau, December 7, 1718.

has never been claimed by the Queens of France, who, at these audiences, were accustomed to sit without even a carpet under their feet. The ladies present could not conceal their astonishment; while the Ambassador stood for some moments as though at a loss what to do. Finally, he approached the "throne," bowed to its occupant, and, after another embarrassing pause, turned his back upon the princess and retired, without having addressed to her a single word.

A meeting of the Corps Diplomatique was at once convened, and the same evening a unanimous protest was sent to the Regent, in which he was informed that no Foreign Minister would in future visit the Duchesse de Berry, unless he had first assured himself that an enterprise of this kind would not be repeated. The Ambassadors, in fact, abstained from presenting themselves at the Luxembourg for some weeks, nor would they consent to return until they had received the most positive assurance that such a thing should never happen again.

These adventures provided the satirists with material of which they were not slow to avail themselves, and produced a fresh crop of *chansons*, caricatures and pamphlets at the expense of the princess. But, offensive as most of these were, they were innocuous in comparison with the obscenities provoked in the first weeks of 1719 by the rumour that an interesting event was ere long expected at the Luxembourg.

The rumour was only too true, and the efforts which the Duchesse de Berry was making to conceal her condition, with which object she had been leading an even gayer life than usual—visits to the Opera-balls, unwhole-

some suppers, "washed down by wine and strong liqueurs,"[1] high play, often prolonged until the small hours of the morning, and so forth, had ill prepared her for what, in those days of unskilled surgeons, was always attended with very considerable danger. As the time approached, the princess shut herself up in a small room at the extremity of her apartments at the Luxembourg, which was very conveniently situated for secret visits. None but Rion, Madame de Mouchy, and a waiting-woman, upon whose discretion she could absolutely rely, had free admission to this room. The Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans were not allowed to enter until their daughter had intimated her willingness to receive them; and, of course, it was the same with Madame de Saint-Simon, the *dames de compagnie* on duty, the first waiting-woman, and the doctors. "All were admitted from time to time, but a bad headache or want of sleep caused them often to be asked to excuse her, or, if they entered, to leave directly afterwards. They did not press their attentions upon the sick woman, knowing only too well the nature of her malady; but contented themselves by inquiring after her through Madame de Mouchy, who, holding the door ajar, replied to them. This ridiculous proceeding was enacted before the inmates of the Luxembourg, of the Palais-Royal, and of many other people, who, for form's sake or out of curiosity, came to inquire the news, and it became the common talk of the town."[1]

With the courage of despair, the Duchesse de Berry struggled up to the last to give the lie to these reports. On March 23, she held her usual weekly reception at the Luxembourg; on the following morning, she drove to

[1] Saint-Simon.

Meudon and passed the day there with her father; on the 26th, she dined with the Carmelites. But two days later the duchess gave birth to a daughter,[1] and was soon in so critical a condition that on the 31st the Abbé Languet, the curé of Saint-Sulpice, urged upon the Regent the advisability of her receiving the Sacraments.

The Regent hesitated to speak to his daughter on the matter, the more so that the curé declared before every one that he should refuse to administer the Sacraments, or to allow them to be administered, so long as Rion or Madame de Mouchy remained in the sick-room or even in the Luxembourg.

The Duc d'Orléans took the curé aside, and for a long time endeavoured to persuade him to give way; but to no purpose. Finding him inflexible, he suggested that the matter should be referred to the Archbishop of Paris, the Cardinal de Noailles. To this Languet consented, and promised to submit to the orders of his diocesan, provided he was allowed to explain his reasons. The Regent no doubt flattered himself that he would find his Eminence more complaisant than the curé. But, if he did, he was soon undeceived.

The Cardinal de Noailles arrived; the duke took him aside with the curé, and their conversation lasted more than half an hour. As Languet's declaration had been public, the prelate judged it fitting that his should be so also; and, as soon as the conference terminated, proclaimed, in a loud voice, before all present, that he warmly approved of the action the curé had taken, adding that he absolutely forbade, under canonical

[1] This child, according to Duclos, subsequently became a nun at the Abbey of Pontoise.

penalties, any priest whatever from administering the Sacraments to the Duchesse de Berry, so long as Rion and Madame de Mouchy remained in the Luxembourg. "It may be imagined," continues Saint-Simon, "what a stir such an inevitable scandal as this caused in a room so full of people; what an embarrassment it occasioned the Duc d'Orléans, and what a noise it immediately made everywhere. Nobody blamed the curé or the archbishop; some because they knew the rules of the Church and did not dare to impugn them; others, the majority, from horror at the conduct of the Duchesse de Berry, and from the hatred which she had drawn upon herself by her pride."

The conference between the Regent and the two ecclesiastics recommenced, this time to decide which of them should undertake to communicate this determination to the sick woman, who, in the meanwhile, had spontaneously made her confession to a Franciscan monk, her director at the Carmelites. After a short discussion, for the princess, in whom the thought of death inspired the most abject terror, was eagerly awaiting the Sacraments, the Cardinal and the curé stepped back, and the Regent, approaching the door of the sick-room, opened it a little way, called Madame de Mouchy, informed her of the decision which had been arrived at, and requested her to announce it to her mistress. "The Mouchy, much astonished and still more indignant, rode the high horse, talked about her merit and of the affront which the bigots were endeavouring to put upon her and upon the Duchesse de Berry, who would never suffer or consent to it, but would die—in the state she was—if they had the imprudence and the cruelty to inform her of it." Finally,

however, she consented to acquaint the princess with the resolution respecting the Sacraments; but she took care to arrange matters to her own liking, for the answer which she presently delivered to the Regent through the half-open door was a blank refusal.

The Duc d'Orléans at once reported this reply to the archbishop and the curé. The latter merely shrugged his shoulders, but the archbishop reproached the prince with having entrusted such a person with so grave a mission, and urged him to intervene personally and exhort his daughter to do her duty as a Christian shortly to appear before God. The Regent, feeling that he did not possess the necessary courage for a scene with the duchess, refused; whereupon the cardinal announced his intention of undertaking the task himself. The prince, who did not dare to forbid him, but who feared that the prelate's remonstrances might bring on a dangerous crisis, begged his Eminence to wait until preparations could be made to receive him. "He went, therefore, and held another discussion through the half-open door, the success of which was on a par with the preceding one. The Duchesse de Berry fell into a fury, broke out into bitter denunciations of these hypocrites, who took advantage of her state and their calling to dishonour her by an unheard-of scandal, and did not spare her father for his stupidity and weakness in allowing it."[1]

The Duc d'Orléans returned to the cardinal, "feeling very small and altogether at a loss what to do." However, he told him that his daughter was too weak and in too much pain for the moment to receive him, and implored him to have a little patience. His Eminence

[1] Saint-Simon.

consented, and remained for two hours, when, perceiving that the Regent had no intention of permitting him to enter the sick-room, he decided that it would be both useless and undignified to wait any longer, and retired; but not before he had reiterated, in a loud voice, to the Abbé Languet his orders not to administer the Sacraments, or to allow them to be administered, until he had obtained the expulsion of Rion and Madame de Mouchy from the Luxembourg.

"The Duc d'Orléans hastened to announce to his daughter the departure of the Cardinal, at which he himself was much relieved. But, on leaving the room, he was astonished to find the curé glued against the door, and still more to hear that he had taken up his post there and meant to remain, happen what might, because he did not intend to be deceived on the subject of the Sacraments. And, in fact, he remained there for four days and four nights, except during short intervals for food and repose, which he took at his house, quite close to the Luxembourg, when his place was filled by two priests, whom he left there."[1]

The Duchesse de Berry, however, refused to yield, although during the night of April 1–2 she was so much worse that she was believed to be dying.[2] But in the morning her illness took an unexpected turn for the better, and on the following day she was pronounced out of danger. Then, and not till then, did the Abbé Languet and his allies raise the siege.

[1] Saint-Simon.

[2] "The Duchesse de Berry passed a very bad night, and was for four hours in very great danger" (Dangeau, April 2, 1719). Buvat, who calls the princess's illness "an apoplexy," says that she was "for three hours like one dead" (*Journal de la Régence*, April, 1719).

Marie Louise Élisabeth d'Orléans,
Duchesse de Berry

From a painting at Versailles by an unknown artist

(Photo by W. A. Mansell & Co.)

No Visible
Boundaries

Such is the narrative of Saint-Simon, which has been generally accepted by historians, but which there is the strongest reason to believe is quite inaccurate in one most important particular. The curé of Saint-Sulpice and the Archbishop of Paris resolutely refused the Sacraments to the Duchesse de Berry, so long as Rion and Madame de Mouchy remained at the Luxembourg, because they believed, as did nearly all Paris, that she was living in sin, and that the child to whom she had just given birth was a child of shame. But they could have had no hesitation about administering them, had they been in possession of what are almost certainly the true facts of the case.

We have seen that the singular tactics adopted by Rion towards the Duchesse de Berry were the result of the counsels of his great-uncle, the Duc de Lauzun. It was he who had drawn up the plan of conduct which compelled Rion, naturally an easy-going and agreeable young man, to show himself tyrannical, exacting, jealous, and capricious, in order to establish his empire more firmly and to reduce the infatuated princess to more complete subjection. But Lauzun went farther than this. Whether because he entertained a grudge against the Royal House for the weary years at Pinerolo to which his pretensions to the hand of *la Grande Mademoiselle* had brought upon him, and desired the piquant revenge which the union of his own nephew with its first princess would afford him, or because he really desired the elevation of his kinsman, he did not cease to represent to Rion that, until a secret marriage had united him to the eldest daughter of the Regent, his situation would remain precarious, because the lady was notoriously fickle in her affections,

and did not lack *soupirants;* and that if, by chance, one of them was to catch her changeful fancy, she would have no hesitation in discarding him, as she had discarded La Haye, La Rochefoucauld, and Bonnivet.

Rion appreciated the wisdom of the old courtier's counsels, the more readily since those which he had already given him had proved so efficacious. He consulted Madame de Mouchy, who warmly approved this daring project. "She knew that she was sure of her lover, and that, when he had become the husband of the Duchesse de Berry, all the doors which shut out their intimacy would be thrown open."[1]

The precious pair worked energetically to reconcile the princess to the idea. "Rion," writes *Madame*, "made her believe that he was of the House of Aragon; that the King of Spain was keeping his kingdom from him, and that, if they were married, they would be able to reclaim it. La Mouchy used to talk to her about this day and night."[2] At the same time, Rion, acting always on the advice of Lauzun, became more tyrannical and capricious than ever. Several times he failed to keep the rendezvous which the princess had given him; he received rudely the envoys whom she despatched to ask for explanations; he pretended to have fallen in love with a *danseuse* at the Opera, at that time very much the mode; he compelled the princess to postpone at the last moment a ball which she had arranged to give; he criticised her toilette, her jewels, and everything she wore, and wished to force her to dress in accordance with his own fancy. In a word, he showed himself a

[1] Saint-Simon.
[2] Letter of October 25, 1719.

veritable despot. These manœuvres succeeded admirably, and the poor Duchesse de Berry, obsessed by the fear of losing so dear a lover, felt prepared to make any sacrifice to retain him. But what appears to have been the determining factor in assuring the triumph of the conspirators were those qualms of conscience, that "most horrible fear of the devil and death,"[1] which, from the end of the year 1716, drove the erring princess to prayer and fasting at the Carmelites.

Although of the marriage itself there is no shadow of doubt—it is admitted alike by the writers of serious memoirs and by the authors of *chroniques scandaleuses*—no documentary evidence of it exists. Saint-Simon places it immediately after the dangerous illness of which we have just spoken, and nearly all contemporaries are of this opinion.[2] "The danger being finally over," writes Duclos, "the ecclesiastical guard was removed, and the princess thought only of recovering her health. Notwithstanding her fury against the priests, the fear of hell had seized her, the more violently that her health was not fully re-established, and that her passion was as lively as ever. Rion, aided by the counsels of the Duc de Lauzun, his uncle, resolved to profit by the disposition of his mistress to bring her to a marriage which should tranquillize her conscience. The Duc de Lauzun, charmed to see his nephew playing at the Luxembourg the same rôle that he himself had played with Mlle. de Montpensier, imagined the plan, the means, the expedients; and Rion acted in conformity. They did not experience great

[1] Saint-Simon.

[2] *Chroniques indiscrètes sur la Régence*. According to the so-called *Mémoires de Maurepas*, the Duchesse de Berry and Rion were secretly married by the curé of Saint-Sulpice in the chapel at the Luxembourg.

difficulty with a woman madly in love and terrified of the devil at the same time. They received the nuptial benediction from a priest but little particular and well paid.

M. de Barthélemy, however, maintains that the marriage took place at the end of the year 1716, that is to say, only a few months after Rion became the lover of the Duchesse de Berry, and more than two years before the scandal at the Luxembourg. And here is what he says:

"In our opinion, it is beyond doubt that the marriage existed from the end of the year 1716, for how otherwise can we explain those frequent visits to the Carmelites, those confessions, those retreats, reported by *Madame* herself? We have, besides, been fortunate enough to discover an incontestable document, which proves the exactitude of these facts. Until recently [1874], the author of this quasi-conversion had been unknown, and a passage from a letter from the Marquis d'Argenson[1] to the Marquise de la Cour de Balleroy, whose precious correspondence is preserved in the Bibliothèque Mazarine, tells us that it is Massillon,[2] which explains the excellent

[1] René Louis de Voyer de Paulmy. He was Minister for Foreign Affairs, November 1744 to January 1747, and author of the celebrated memoirs bearing his name.

[2] Jean Baptiste Massillon (1663-1742). He was one of the most celebrated of French preachers, and has been called "the Racine of the pulpit." The son of a notary, he entered the Congregation of the Oratory in 1681, and ten years later drew attention to himself by an eloquent funeral oration on Villars, Archbishop of Vienne. Summoned to Paris and placed at the head of the seminary of Saint-Magloire, he greatly enhanced his reputation by the lectures which he delivered there. At Advent 1699 and Lent 1704 he was selected to preach before the Court, and was warmly complimented by Louis XIV., who paid, on the former occasion, a striking tribute to Massillon's fearless eloquence. "I have heard," said he, "eloquent preachers in my chapel and have been satisfied with them; but, when I have heard you, I feel dissatisfied with myself." Massillon was chosen to preach the funeral oration on the Prince de Conti (1709), on the Grand Dauphin (1711), and on

relations of this great orator with the Regent. 'People speak of a grand conversion at the Luxembourg,' writes he on January 9, 1717; 'Père Massillon has been its instrument. In truth, never has priest or monk better conducted an affair. He has persuaded her, at the end of several retreats which have been made at the Carmelites, that she must marry to take away the sin. *She has espoused Rion.* I tell you of it, because I have seen the wedding-dress, which is very beautiful.' This declaration, formulated by an ocular witness, and, moreover, an important person, can leave no doubt, and abundantly justifies me."

Without admitting the learned historian's contention that this letter amounts to a positive proof that the marriage took place before the end of 1716—for the future Minister for Foreign Affairs was not always very careful of the truth,[1] and it should be remembered that he was at this time only twenty years of age, and was writing to a fair lady, who, like too many women of the period, found a correspondence the more attractive the more piquant and sensational it happened to be—never-

Louis XIV. himself. All three, and particularly the last, which opened with the words, "*Dieu seule est grand, mes frères,*" are considered masterpieces of pulpit oratory. In 1717, he was appointed Bishop of Clermont, though he was not consecrated until two years later, and selected to preach the Lenten sermons before the young King, on which occasion he composed his celebrated *Petit-Carême*, a series of ten short discourses. In 1719, in which year he was elected a member of the French Academy, he withdrew to his diocese, and only twice subsequently revisited Paris, namely, to attend the consecration of Dubois as cardinal and to preach *Madame's* funeral oration (1723). At Clermont, his charity and amiable disposition made him generally beloved.

[1] In the same letter, the marquis brings an accusation against Massillon, the falseness of which is too obvious to require any refutation: "The director who is, it is said, as interesting in the *ruelle* as in the pulpit, has become the gallant [of the Duchesse de Berry]."

theless, taken in conjunction with the circumstances to which it refers, it certainly seems to us to point very strongly to the princess having regularised her relations with Rion about this time.

And, even supposing the marriage did not take place at the date he alleges, there is still every reason to believe that the child to whom the Duchesse de Berry gave birth in the spring of 1719 was born in wedlock. For more than two years preceding this event the princess had been, as we know, a frequent visitor at the Carmelites of the Faubourg Saint-Jacques. She passed nearly all the great festivals of the Church among these holy women; she fasted as rigidly as they did; she rose in the night to say her office with them; scarcely a week went by, when she was in Paris, without her visiting the convent; and sometimes she spent several days at a time in retreat there. Are we to believe that for more than two years she persisted in the most revolting hypocrisy that it is possible to imagine? Are we to believe that for more than two years the Carmelites, a community justly famed for generations throughout France for their piety, and perfectly informed of all that was happening in the world outside, would have tolerated in their midst a woman who persisted in living in mortal sin?

We shall presently see how feverishly anxious was the Duchesse de Berry during the last months of her life to secure the Regent's consent to her marriage being made public. If, then, she were already married at the time of her illness, she must certainly have caused her father to be informed of the fact when she lay upon what she believed to be her death-bed; and the conversations between the latter and Madame de Mouchy through

the half-open door of the sick-room must have related to the princess's desire that the Duc d'Orléans should then and there announce the marriage, which would have saved Rion and the confidante from the disgrace which menaced them, put a stop to the slanderous reports which were in circulation, and removed all objection on the part of the Cardinal de Noailles to the administration of the Sacraments. As to the " fury " of which Saint-Simon speaks, if the poor woman, in the almost moribund state in which she then lay, was capable of flying into a fury, it was more likely to have been inspired by the refusal of her father to set her right with the Church and the world than by the firmness of the ecclesiastics, who were only performing their obvious duty.

CHAPTER IX

The Duchesse de Berry leaves Paris for Meudon—Opposition of the Regent to the declaration of her marriage with Rion—He visits the princess but twice in three weeks—His conversation with Saint-Simon—Rion ordered to join his regiment on the Spanish frontier—Painful scenes between father and daughter—A fatal supper-party—The Duchesse de Berry falls ill—She removes from Meudon to La Muette—Her cruel sufferings—She becomes better, but this improvement is speedily followed by a dangerous relapse—Her condition declared to be hopeless—Rival doctors—Death of the Duchesse de Berry—Grief of the Regent, which, however, is of short duration—Obsequies of the princess—Her debts—Madame de Mouchy and the ring-case—Banishment of this personage—Disgrace of Rion—His later years.

THE Duchesse de Berry had decided that, as soon as she was able to be moved, she would go to Meudon and remain there until the autumn, by which time she hoped that the scandal she had occasioned would be to some extent forgotten, or that her father would be persuaded to allow her to announce her marriage. The doctors did not fail to represent to her the danger she would incur in travelling so soon after an illness which had all but proved fatal; but "nothing could make her endure Paris any longer,"[1] and on April 12 she set out for Meudon, followed by Rion, Madame de Mouchy, and the majority of her Household.

Her departure was undoubtedly hastened by the behaviour of the Duc d'Orléans, who, though he had tolerated his daughter's *liaison* with Rion, was furiously

[1] Saint-Simon.

indignant on learning that it had been transformed into a marriage, and still more exasperated when she demanded his consent to the announcement of the misalliance which she had contracted. To mark his displeasure, he did not visit the Luxembourg for a whole week—that is to say, from the 4th, on which day a violent quarrel seems to have taken place between him and the princess, until the 11th—and the abstention of this adoring father, who had always been in the habit of spending several hours a day with his daughter, naturally aroused much comment and greatly aggravated the scandal.

The removal of the Duchesse de Berry to Meudon, in the delicate state of health in which she then was, was followed, as we might expect,[1] by a relapse, and on April 18 Dangeau records that she "does not leave her bed and has the double tertian fever." This malady was doubtless aggravated by mental agitation, for the Regent gave no indication of abandoning his opposition to the announcement of the marriage, and, not being minded to endure any more painful scenes just then, allowed several days to pass without coming to see her. On the other hand, Rion, who had a shrewd suspicion that the princess's days were numbered, pestered her unceasingly to make the declaration which would assure his future ; and, quite apart from her desire to satisfy him, she knew that her own reputation—or what shreds of it still remained to her—imperatively demanded this step.

[1] *Madame* attributes this relapse to her granddaughter's intemperance : "The illness of the duchess is the result of having drunk too much brandy and eaten enormously. As soon as she feels a trifle better, she no longer exercises any moderation in eating and drinking, and suffers a relapse." And she adds : "It is a marvel that she is still alive ; she is diaphanous, and is breaking up from day to day." Letter of April 16, 1719 (edit. Jaeglé).

On the 19th, the Duc d'Orléans at length made his appearance at Meudon, where he appears to have experienced a very unpleasant time, for a week elapsed before he could summon up courage to repeat his visit. In the meantime, he had decided to consult Saint-Simon, upon whose support he knew that he could rely ; and one day, when he had gone to visit the Duchesse d'Orléans at the Abbey of Montmartre, where she was making one of her frequent " retreats," he sent for the duke, and told him of the scandalous misalliance which his daughter had contracted and of her determination to declare it. Saint-Simon tells us that, aware of the strength of the duchess's passion, her fear of the devil, and the scandal which had just happened, the marriage itself did not surprise him, but that he was profoundly astonished that a princess so inordinately proud should be so anxious to proclaim it. " The Duc d'Orléans," he continues, " dilated upon his troubles, his anger, that of *Madame*, who wished to proceed to the last extremities, and the extreme vexation of the Duchesse d'Orléans. Fortunately, the majority of the officers destined to serve on the frontiers of Spain (War with that country had just been declared) were leaving every day, and Rion had only remained on account of the illness of the Duchesse de Berry. The Duc d'Orléans thought that the shortest plan would be to encourage hopes by delay, in forcing Rion to depart, flattering himself that the declaration would be deferred more easily in his absence than in his presence. I warmly approved this idea, and on the morrow Rion received, at Meudon, a curt and positive order to depart to join his regiment in the Army of Berwick." The Duchesse de Berry was beside herself with grief and indignation on

learning of this order, but, " knowing the cause, she felt her inability to hinder its execution." Rion, on his side, did not dare to disobey, and on April 26 he set out for Perpignan, where his regiment was stationed.

On the same day, we learn from Dangeau, the Duc d'Orléans, greatly daring, went again to Meudon. The writer adds that he " returned very early," and we can well believe that he found no inducement to prolong his visit. " Father and daughter," says Saint-Simon, " feared each other, and the departure of Rion had not smoothed over matters between them. She had told him, and repeated it, that she was a rich widow, mistress of her own actions, independent of him ; had flown into a fury and roundly abused the Duc d'Orléans, whose arguments and opposition she was unable to endure. He had experienced these scenes at the Luxembourg, when she was convalescent, and he experienced not less violent ones at Meudon, during the few visits he paid her there. She wished to declare her marriage, and all the intelligence, art, gentleness, anger, threats, prayers, and entreaties of the duke barely sufficed to make her consent to a brief delay."

These painful scenes were scarcely calculated to re-establish the health of a person but lately returned from the brink of the grave, and, although on the 29th—on which day *Madame* came to see her granddaughter, for the first time since her departure from Paris—Dangeau notes that the princess was better, she was still very weak. The infrequent visits of her relatives, and particularly of the Regent, who, as we have seen, had only been twice to Meudon in a fortnight, although it was but six leagues from Paris, occasioned her the keenest mortification, the

more so since their abstention, she knew, was being remarked by the public, and must serve to confirm its suspicions as to the nature of her recent illness at the Luxembourg. It was this which determined her, the moment she was able to leave her bed, to give a supper-party to her father on the terrace at Meudon. In vain the doctors represented to her the criminal imprudence of such a proceeding, declaring that, in her state of health, she was peculiarly liable to take a chill, which would almost certainly prove fatal. "It was for that very reason that she persisted in the idea that a supper on the terrace, so soon after the extreme danger in which she had been, would dissipate all suspicion that she had been confined, and induce the belief that she was on the same terms as ever with the Duc d'Orléans, notwithstanding the unusual rarity of his visits."[1]

On May 1 the fête took place, but it did not have the effect on public opinion which the princess desired; while the consequences of her exposure to the night air was an intermittent fever, which the continued opposition of the Regent to the declaration of her marriage, the separation from her beloved Rion, and the pointed manner in which her family avoided her did not tend to diminish. She grew disgusted with Meudon, "like people ill in body and mind who, in their chagrin, attribute everything to the air and the place,"[2] and, despite the remonstrances of the doctors, decided to remove to La Muette. La Muette, being much nearer Paris, she hoped that the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans would visit her more frequently, if only for form's sake. "The Duchesse de Berry," writes Dangeau, on May 10, "intends to come to-day to

[1] Saint-Simon. [2] *Ibid.*

La Muette, the air of which she believes to be better for her than Meudon." However, the princess was too unwell to leave Meudon until the 14th, when she was conveyed to La Muette "in a large coach, between two sheets."[1]

Short as the journey was, it, nevertheless, caused her cruel suffering, for her other ailments were now complicated by a severe attack of gout. She determined to try the waters of Passy, and, though they appear to have afforded her some temporary alleviation, since on the 16th, when she received a visit from her father, Dangeau describes her as "much relieved," this was speedily followed by another relapse, of so serious a nature that both *Madame* and the Duchesse d'Orléans, notwithstanding their indignation against her, felt obliged to hasten to La Muette. The elder princess, who beneath a rough exterior concealed a kind heart, was touched by the sufferings of her granddaughter. "I went to see Madame de Berry on Sunday last [May 21]," she writes. "I found her in a sad state; she had such frightful pains in the soles and toes of both feet that the tears came into my eyes. I saw that my presence prevented her from crying out, and thereupon I took my departure. I thought she looked very bad. They caused three doctors to hold a consultation, who determined to bleed her in the foot. They had great difficulty in deciding her to submit, for the pain in her feet was so intolerable that she uttered loud cries when the sheets of the bed merely touched them. The bleeding was successful, and she has suffered less since.[2] It was the gout in both feet."[3]

[1] Dangeau.

[2] "The pains of the Duchesse de Berry were greatly intensified for two hours after she was bled, but they diminished afterwards, and she slept for eight consecutive hours" (*Journal de Dangeau*, May 21, 1719).

[3] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of May 23, 1719.

These agonizing pains in the feet returned at the end of the month and continued at intervals until the middle of June,[1] when they greatly diminished, though the princess was still unable to walk. "The Duchesse de Berry is much better, according to what they say," writes Dangeau on June 19, "and the doctors declare that there is no danger."

Such was certainly the opinion of the patient herself, and on the 24th she celebrated her supposed convalescence by giving a grand concert at the La Muette, at which she announced her intention of returning to the Luxembourg. On the 30th, we learn from Dangeau that she "had borrowed the King's litter to take the air in the Bois de Boulogne, but, finding herself too feeble for that, had postponed this promenade until Sunday (July 1)." He adds that she still reckons on returning to Paris at an early date, and is having the Luxembourg refurnished.

But the Duchesse de Berry was never to see the Luxembourg or Paris again. During the early days of July she continued to improve in health; the gout in her feet ceased to trouble her, and she was even able to walk a short distance. But on the 14th she was suddenly taken dangerously ill, and it was soon recognised that her chances of surmounting this new crisis were very slight. "The Duc d'Orléans returned this evening from Saint-Cloud," writes Dangeau. "He had stopped at La Muette, where he found the Duchesse de Berry worse than she has yet been; she has a rather violent fever, and he did not wish to leave La Muette until she had been bled. Her pain and her weakness are increasing." And on the

[1] Writing on June 1, Buvat assures us that the poor woman uttered such agonizing cries they could be heard at a distance.

morrow: "The Duc d'Orléans was awakened early in the morning and informed that the Duchesse de Berry had passed a very bad night. The doctors consider her in very great danger. The Duchesse d'Orléans remained with her until midnight. They intend to give Madame de Berry an emetic to-morrow. It is a remedy which appears very dangerous in the state in which she is, but they believe there is nothing else which can afford her relief."

On the morning of the 16th, the Franciscan confessor of the Duchesse de Berry was summoned to La Muette, and ordered not to quit the château. The duchess, however, did not appear to consider that she was in any real danger, for she refused to submit to the treatment which the doctors prescribed or to make her peace with Heaven, and "relations and doctors were at length obliged to speak a language to her not used towards princesses, save in the most urgent extremity."[1] This had its effect, and she consented to take the only remedy which it was believed could save her, and to receive the Sacrament later in the day.

The emetic greatly relieved the patient, and it is quite probable that her life might have been prolonged for some time, had she not, with a folly which seems almost inconceivable, taken advantage of this respite to consume a quantity of fruit and iced beer and wine, with the result that might be expected.[2] In the interval, she had confessed

[1] Saint-Simon.

[2] Buvat, *Journal de la Régence*. *Madame* also speaks of this fatal gluttony, but, according to her, the unfortunate princess had been indulging in similar clandestine repasts for the last fortnight. "The poor Duchesse de Berry," she writes, on the morrow of her granddaughter's death, "took her own life as effectually as if she had blown out her brains with a pistol, for she consumed in secret melon, figs, and milk. She confessed to me herself, and her doctor told me, that

and subsequently received the Sacrament publicly, "speaking," says Saint-Simon, "to those present concerning her life and her state, but like a queen in both instances. After this spectacle was over," he continues, "and she was alone with her intimates, she applauded herself for the firmness she had displayed, and asked them if she had not spoken well, and if she were not dying with firmness and courage."

The next day, the princess's case appeared desperate. "There is no longer any hope of curing her," writes Dangeau. "The Duc d'Orléans went [to La Muette] in the morning, and the Duchesse d'Orléans goes frequently, and is always with her. On the 18th, there being no improvement in her condition, she received the Viaticum and Extreme Unction from the hands of the Abbé de Castries, Archbishop-elect of Tours, her first almoner. The Regent and the Duc de Chartres preceded the Holy Sacrament on its way from the church of Passy to La Muette, and also on its return. Saint-Simon observes that "she received it, as it appeared, with much piety,

she had closed her door against him, as well as against the other doctors, for a fortnight, to accomplish this fine work."

In another letter, written three weeks later, the old princess accuses Madame de Mouchy of having abetted the Duchesse de Berry in this; and there can be no doubt that this unscrupulous woman, knowing that her mistress was doomed, was ready to satisfy all her caprices, in order to ingratiate herself with her and extract from her, as we shall presently see, all that she could: "As for the death of the poor Duchesse de Berry, I know well who ought to be blamed for this misfortune. It is the favourite of the poor duchess, the accursed Mouchy, who is the cause of her death. She killed her as effectually as though she had driven a knife into her throat. The duchess was consumed by a slow fever; her favourite brought her, in the night, all kinds of things to eat: fricassees, little *patés*, melons, salad, milk, prunes, figs; she gave her iced beer to drink. For a fortnight she was unwilling to call in any doctor, and the fever kept on increasing all the time." *Correspondance complète*, Letter of August 10, 1719.

quite differently from the first time."[1] Afterwards, she sank into a sort of coma, from which she recovered only at long intervals.

On the 19th, as a last hope, the Regent, on the advice of some of his friends, decided to call in a quack doctor of the name of Garus, who had invented an elixir much talked of just then, and the secret of which Louis XV. afterwards purchased. Garus lost no time in obeying the summons, but found the princess so ill that he expressed the opinion that matters had gone too far for even his wonderful remedy to save her. However, he consented to administer it, stipulating, however, that nothing was to be given the patient except by his advice.

Dangeau says that this elixir " revived the Duchesse de Berry a little, which inspired some fresh hope." But Saint-Simon assures us that it " succeeded beyond all hope " and that " nothing remained but to continue it " ; and accuses Chirac, the first physician of the Duc d'Orléans, of having caused the death of the princess rather than leave to Garus the honour of curing her. Here is what he says :

" The Duchesse de Berry continued to improve and became so much better that Chirac, her regular doctor, began to fear for his reputation, and, seizing his opportunity, when Garus was asleep upon a sofa, hurriedly presented a purgative to the duchess and made her swallow it, without saying a word to any one, the two nurses chosen to wait upon her, and who were the only persons present, not daring to oppose him. The audacity of this was as complete as its villainy, for the Duc and

[1] " She received the last Sacraments with such firmness," writes *Madame*, " that every one's heart was rent " (Letter of July 19, 1719).

Duchesse d'Orléans were close at hand in the salon. From this moment to the one in which the patient relapsed into a condition similar to that from which the elixir had rescued her, there was but the briefest interval. Garus was awakened and summoned. Seeing this disorder, he cried out that a purgative had been administered, which, whatever it might be, was poison in the state in which the princess was. He wished to depart; he was detained and conducted to the Duchesse d'Orléans. A great uproar ensued; cries from Garus, impudence and unequalled audacity from Chirac, in defending what he had done. He was unable to deny it, for the two nurses had been questioned and had admitted it. The Duchesse de Berry drew near her end while this debate was going on, and neither Garus nor Chirac could do anything to prevent it. She lasted, however, the rest of the day, and did not expire until about midnight. Chirac, seeing the death-agony approaching, traversed the room, made an insulting reverence at the foot of the bed, which was open, wished her 'a pleasant journey' (in equivalent terms), and went off to Paris. The marvel is that nothing came of this and that he remained the doctor of the Duc d'Orléans."

It is only fair to Chirac to observe that this charge is unsupported by any testimony whatever, and, since the accused physician enjoyed great influence at the Palais-Royal and might very well have offended Saint-Simon, it is probably merely a fresh instance of the outrageous manner in which that vindictive chronicler was in the habit of calumniating those against whom he happened to cherish a grievance.

However that may be, the improvement in the con-

dition of the patient which Garus's elixir had effected was not maintained. "The Duchesse de Berry," writes Dangeau, under date July 20, "was in a very weak state this morning, and in the evening it was thought that she would not survive the night." In point of fact, the unfortunate princess expired in the early hours of the morning of the 21st. She had completed her twenty-fourth year only a month previously. "The poor Duchesse de Berry died to-night between two and three o'clock," writes *Madame*. "Her end was very peaceful; they say that she died as though she had fallen asleep."

None of her relatives was with her in her last moments, the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans having quitted La Muette about an hour previously. The Regent, however, had wished to remain until the end, and Saint-Simon tells us that it was he who dissuaded him, though not without great difficulty. At this supreme moment, indeed, the kind-hearted prince had forgotten all the trouble which his daughter had caused him during the last few months, and remembered only the devoted affection which he had cherished for her since her infancy. Saint-Simon describes him as "plunged in the most bitter grief," and says that he wept so copiously that "he feared that he would suffocate." It was the same on the morrow at the Palais-Royal, where *Madame* "found her poor son in a state which would have softened a rock,"[1]

[1] Saint-Simon asserts that *Madame* was little affected by her granddaughter's death; but the contrary would appear to have been the case: "She [the Duchesse de Berry] said," writes the old princess, "that she was dying without regret, since she was reconciled with God, and that, if her life were to be prolonged, she might offend Him anew. That touched us so much that I should not be able to express it. At bottom, she was a good woman, and, if her mother had taken more care of her, and had brought her up better, there would have been nothing but good to say of her. *I confess that her death goes to my heart.*"

and where the Duchesse d'Orléans, according to Buvat, thought it necessary to enter his bedroom, accompanied by the Duc de Chartres and his sisters, and "to entreat him earnestly to console himself as best he could for this loss, representing to him that the prince and princesses, his children, stood in need of the preservation of his health and his protection."[1] However, if we are to believe Saint-Simon, the reflection that the yoke to which he had submitted, and had of late found so heavy, was severed, and that he was now free from all annoyance on the score of the marriage with Rion, soon brought him consolation. As for the Duchesse d'Orléans, we can well believe the chronicler's assertion that she regarded her daughter's death as a deliverance.

The death of the Duchesse de Berry aroused comparatively little interest among the public, greatly to the relief of the inmates of the Palais-Royal, who had feared a posthumous scandal to crown those which the deceased princess had caused during her life. Several couplets, however, of a more or less obscene character, were circulated in Paris. One of these compositions purported to relate the life of the princess, and the opening verses—the only ones which can possibly be transcribed—ran thus:

"Celle de qui j'écris l'histoire
Est la Messaline du temps;
J'en veux éterniser la gloire
Par des hommages éclatants."

The autopsy which was performed on the Duchesse de Berry on the day after her death proved that no amount of medical skill would have sufficed to save her. "Her head was all full of water," writes Madame; "she had

[1] *Journal de la Régence.*

an ulcer in the stomach, another in the hip; the rest was like pap, and her liver was affected." Saint-Simon, who had been commissioned by the Regent to attend this operation, adds that she was "found to be again enceinte," so that her death saved the Regent from having to decide between acknowledging Rion as a son-in-law and a repetition of the scandal of the preceding spring.

Saint-Simon had also been charged with the funeral arrangements, and he took care that they should be as simple as the rank of the departed would permit. On the 22nd, the princess's heart was taken to the Val-de-Grace by her first almoner, the Abbé de Castries, and Mlle. de la Roche-sur-Yon, who were accompanied by Madame de Saint-Simon and two of the "*dames.*" On the morrow, at ten o'clock at night, the body, which had been placed, after the autopsy, on a catafalque in the chapel of La Muette, where masses had been said without interruption, was conveyed in an eight-horse coach to Saint-Denis, escorted by forty pages and guards bearing torches, and followed by two carriages, one containing the almoners, the other the ladies of the princess. The funeral service was celebrated, according to usage, at the beginning of September; but it was marked by an entire absence of the customary pomp, and there was no funeral oration, a most extraordinary omission at the obsequies of a member of the Royal House. The reason, however, is sufficiently obvious. "They have been so embarrassed about making her funeral oration," writes *Madame*, "that they decided that it was best not to make one at all."[1]

[1] Letter of August 1, 1719.

Although, as we have mentioned elsewhere, the deceased princess had enjoyed an immense income, she was found to have left behind debts amounting to over 400,000 livres, which the Regent was called upon to discharge, as her husband's appanage and the pension which Louis XIV. had accorded her had reverted to the State. It is, however, scarcely surprising that her revenues, great as they were, should have been insufficient to meet her expenditure, since she had had two costly residences in the Luxembourg and La Muette and, latterly, a third, Meudon, to keep up ; [1] never denied herself anything which happened to take her fancy ; appears to have kept no accounts, and had been mercilessly exploited by her greedy and unscrupulous favourites.

The untimely death of the Duchesse de Berry caused the greatest consternation among the officers of her Household. The majority of them had, according to the custom of the time, purchased their charges, generally for considerable sums, since they had naturally looked forward to enjoying the emoluments for many years, or of being able to sell them whenever they felt so inclined. Many had invested the whole of their savings in acquiring these offices, and now found themselves faced by ruin and destitution. The Regent, however, came to the rescue. He continued the salaries of the higher officials, with one notable exception, of which we shall presently speak, and accorded the others pensions for life, to reimburse them for the loss of their charges ; and on August 27 *Madame* writes : " All the people who were in the service

[1] Buvat says that she had at the moment of her death, at these different establishments, no less than eight hundred servants.

of the Duchesse de Berry appear entirely consoled for her death." And she adds: "I, too, am consoled, on account of many things which I have learned since her death, but which cannot be committed to paper."

Buvat tells us that, to pay these salaries and pensions and to discharge the princess's debts, "the Regent judged proper to establish a levy of four sols per livre on the *tailles* of the generality of Paris." There can be little doubt, however, that Buvat was misinformed, and that the levy had been made for an entirely different purpose, for, great as were the faults of Philippe d'Orléans, he was scrupulously honourable in financial matters, and nothing is more unlikely than that he would have thrown the burden of his daughter's extravagance upon the shoulders of the subjects of the King of France. Moreover, there would have been no excuse for so disgraceful an abuse of his authority, since we learn, from the official report of the affixing of the seals at La Muette and Meudon, published by the same chronicler, that the Duchesse de Berry had left behind her "a casket filled with jewels of all kinds in shagreen boxes of various sizes . . . three other shagreen boxes, which the said casket was unable to contain, in which were jewels of various kinds; a cardboard box containing several precious stones and a great oblong diamond; a chest filled with candlesticks and other pieces of silver and silver-gilt"; and so forth. The sale of these objects, some of which must have been of great value, would certainly have gone far to furnish the Regent with the amount required.

The same report mentions that Madame Margrais, one of the late princess's waiting-women, had made a declaration, in which she stated that "three ring-cases,

two of shagreen and one of a Chinese wood," were missing at La Muette. What became of two of these cases is unknown, but the third happened to be safe in the Regent's bureau, and how it came there deserves to be told.

On the evening of April 16, a little while after she had made her confession and received the Sacrament, the Duchesse de Berry dismissed every one from her room, with the exception of Madame de Mouchy, and then, pointing to the key of her jewel-casket, told her confidante to bring her ring-case, containing a collection of rings which Saint-Simon estimates to have been worth more than 200,000 écus. This ring-case, according to Madame de Mouchy's account, she presented to her, in recognition of her faithful services; but it seems far more probable that the princess limited her generosity to one or two of these costly trinkets, and that the favourite, whose avarice had been excited by the sight of such a fortune, coolly appropriated the whole collection.

Such a proceeding would have been quite in keeping with her odious character, and *Madame* assures us that she had been robbing the Duchesse de Berry systematically for some time, with the aid of duplicate keys, and had "made fine coups." M. de Barthélemy even thinks that the whole story was a fabrication, and that Madame de Mouchy, seeing that her mistress had only a few days to live, crowned her numerous peculations by a monstrous robbery; but it seems very natural that, after the criminal complaisance she had displayed during the princess's illness, she should have received some rich present.

However that may be, on the evening in question

Madame de Mouchy found herself in possession of the ring-case, which she showed to her husband. That gentleman, who, though as avaricious as his wife, was more timid, expressed his fear that, when the princess was dead, and her ring-case was found to be missing, they might be accused of theft, if they said nothing about it before. Madame admitted the force of what he said, and accordingly informed, in confidence, one or two of the few friends she possessed in the Duchesse de Berry's Household, where both she and her husband were generally hated and despised, of the magnificent present of which she had just been the recipient.

These friends, of course, promised the strictest secrecy, and equally, of course, proceeded to communicate the news to the first person they happened to meet, with the result that it speedily reached the ears of Madame de Saint-Simon. That lady, who knew the immense value of the contents of her mistress's ring-case, was so astonished that she deemed it her duty to inform the Duc d'Orléans without a moment's delay. The Regent had left La Muette an hour or two before, but she wrote a letter and despatched it to the Palais-Royal by a trusty messenger.

Meanwhile, Madame de Mouchy, learning that the affair had become public property, had decided to take counsel of Madame de Saint-Simon. She found the *dame d'honneur* in the salon, which, though it was now very late, was still full of people, since the Duchesse de Berry was so much worse—thanks to the clandestine repast of which we have spoken elsewhere—that no one thought of going to bed. Approaching Madame de

Saint-Simon, with an air of well-simulated embarrassment, she related what had occurred, and then, drawing the ring-case from her pocket, showed it to her. The duchess, after duly admiring it, called the ladies who were nearest her to come and admire it also, and in their presence—for she had called them with this intention—told Madame de Mouchy that it was indeed a superb present, but that, for that very reason, she advised her to go and inform the Regent of her good fortune as soon as possible. This counsel, given in the presence of witnesses, greatly embarrassed Madame de Mouchy, but, coming as it did from the head of the Duchesse de Berry's Household, it was equivalent to an order; and she accordingly replied that she would act as Madame de Saint-Simon suggested, and left the room to find her husband and acquaint him with the very unwelcome turn the affair had taken. But let us allow Saint-Simon to relate the *dénoûement* in his own words:

"The next morning, they appeared together at the Palais-Royal, and demanded to speak to the Duc d'Orléans, who, having been warned by Madame de Saint-Simon, ordered them to be admitted immediately, and requested the few people who happened to be in his cabinet to withdraw, for it was very early in the forenoon. Madame de Mouchy, her husband by her side, complimented the Regent as well as she could. The Duc d'Orléans, for all response, inquired where the ring-case was. She drew it from her pocket and handed it to him. The Duc d'Orléans took it, opened it, examined it carefully to see if there was anything missing, for he knew perfectly what it contained, shut it again, drew a key from his pocket, locked it up in a drawer of his bureau, and then

dismissed them by an inclination of the head. They bowed and withdrew, equally infuriated and ashamed. From that time they did not reappear at La Muette. Soon afterwards, the Duc d'Orléans arrived there, and, after visiting his daughter for a moment, drew Madame de Saint-Simon aside, thanked her warmly for what she had written to him and what she had done, and informed her of how he had just acted, and that the ring-case would not again leave his hands. So angry was he at this effrontery that he was unable to refrain from speaking of it in the salon, in terms very damaging to M. and Madame de Mouchy, amid great applause from all the company, even from the servants."

Saint-Simon's assertion that Madame de Mouchy did not return to La Muette after her interview with the Regent at the Palais-Royal would appear to be incorrect, since Dangeau, whose accuracy is beyond dispute, writes under date April 20: "Madame de Mouchy left La Muette before midnight, seeing Madame de Berry's condition to be hopeless; all the people of the Household appeared very animated against her." Her return would certainly have been necessary, if only to secure the fruits of her peculations.

Not only did this detestable harpy feel no regret at the untimely death of the princess whom she had so shamelessly exploited, but she did not even attempt to simulate it. "The Mouchy, who used to control everything," writes *Madame*, "was not afflicted for a single moment. She played the flute at her window, and the day when this poor princess was conveyed to Saint-Denis she went to dine in Paris with a numerous company. She drank champagne and ate as gluttonously as though nothing

was happening, and indulged in impertinent talk, which shocked every one present."[1]

Having been alone excepted from the ladies of the Duchesse de Berry's Household who had preserved their salaries, she had the audacity to demand an audience of the Regent, to inquire the reason. He declined to receive her, but referred her to the Duc de la Vrillière, one of the Secretaries of State. To La Vrillière she accordingly went, accompanied by her husband, and was promptly handed a *lettre de cachet* ordering them both to leave Paris within forty-eight hours and not to return. They were, as a matter of fact, permitted to return some years later ; " but," says Saint-Simon, " none of the events which had happened in the interval sufficed to re-establish their position in the world, or to extricate them from contempt, obscurity, and oblivion."

As for Rion, he experienced a rude awakening from his dreams of greatness. As soon as the news of the Duchesse de Berry's death reached the Army of Berwick, the Prince de Conti, who had always detested his cousin, hurried off to find the widower, and, when he caught sight of him, began to sing a coarse song, beginning :

> " Elle est morte, la vache aux paniers,
> Il n'en faut plus parler."[2]

Others were not slow to follow the example of a Prince of the Blood, and altogether the young gentleman appears to have passed a very unpleasant time. Saint-Simon assures us that his despair at the ruin of his hopes was such that his friends had to keep watch over him to

[1] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of August 1, 1719.
[2] *Ibid.*, Letter of September 28, 1719.

prevent him from destroying himself; but probably he exaggerates, since Rion had feathered his nest warmly enough to make life well worth living. It was not, however, nearly so warmly feathered as he imagined, for which he had to thank his light-fingered friend Madame de Mouchy. "The Mouchy," writes *Madame*, "was certainly the most unworthy favourite that was ever seen; she betrayed, deceived, and robbed her princess. What she did that was amusing, was to rob her lover, the Comte de Rion, to whom the Duchesse de Berry had given large sums in cash and jewellery. He had placed it all in a casket which he had left at Meudon. His *chère amie* stole the casket and went off with it. I consider that very comical."[1]

At the close of the campaign, Rion sold the colonelcy of his regiment and his government of Cognac, and retired into private life. As his reappearance on the scene of his amorous successes so soon after what had passed would have been very embarrassing for the Palais-Royal, he was not allowed to return to Paris with the other officers; but this prohibition was withdrawn some months later. "M. de Rion, who has not had permission to return since the campaign which he made in Spain," writes Dangeau, on April 24, 1720, "obtained it a few days ago, and has arrived here. It is said that he is married."

This report was incorrect, and, though Rion appears to have had more than one opportunity of making an advantageous marriage, he preferred to remain a widower. But, as *Madame* tells us that "all the women ran after him," he no doubt found an abundance of consolation. Satisfied with having assured himself a place in history, "he led a

[1] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of September 12, 1719.

life in conformity with his tastes, that is to say of pleasure, but privately. He remained obscure, and this obscurity absorbed him."[1]

He died about the age of forty, much regretted by the many friends whom his good-nature and pleasant manners had gained him.

[1] Saint-Simon.

CHAPTER X

Charlotte Aglaé d'Orléans, Mlle. de Valois, makes her appearance in Society—She refuses to marry the Prince de Dombes—The young princess is sent to her grandmother at Saint-Cloud—*Madame's* portrait of her—The Duc de Richelieu—His extraordinary fascination for women—His *liaison* with Mlle. de Charolais—Refusal of the Condés to countenance their marriage—Violent passion of Mlle. de Valois for the duke—Open rivalry between her and Mlle. de Charolais—Indignation of the Regent—Richelieu conspires with Spain—He falls into a trap prepared for him by the French Government—Warning which he receives from Mlle. de Valois—He is arrested and conducted to the Bastille—Despair of the two princesses, who make common cause to secure the liberation of their idol—Their visit to the Bastille—Exasperation of *Madame* against her granddaughter—Matrimonial projects in regard to Mlle. de Valois—A *mariage manqué*—Francesco d'Este, Prince of Modena, proposed as a husband—The Regent accords his daughter the liberty of Richelieu, in consideration of her consenting to marry this prince—Amorous escapades of the released gallant—Aversion of Mlle. de Valois to the alliance arranged for her—Her marriage—She falls ill of measles, which she has purposely contracted, but recovers—Her despair.

THE affairs of the unfortunate Duchesse de Berry and the ambitions of Mlle. d'Orléans were not the only family matters to engage the attention of the Regent during the year 1719. His third daughter, Mlle. de Valois, inspired apparently by the example of her eldest sister, had lately contrived to achieve a most undesirable prominence, and bade fair to cause her relatives as much trouble and anxiety as the departed princess.

It will be remembered that this young lady, now in her nineteenth year, had, in the summer of 1714, been withdrawn from the Abbey of Chelles, where, to her profound

disgust, she had been placed *en pension* with Mlle. d'Orléans. Her return to the world gave rise to a rumour that she was about to be married. This, however, was incorrect, although twelve months before a scheme had been set on foot by the Duchesse de Berry to marry her to the Prince de Conti, which had been promptly nipped in the bud by Louis XIV., who had compelled Conti to espouse Mlle. de Bourbon, sister of *Monsieur le Duc*, while, on the same day (July 8, 1713), the latter prince took to wife, likewise by his Majesty's command, Marie Anne de Bourbon-Conti.

For some months after leaving Chelles, Mlle. de Valois was lodged at the Val-de-Grâce, though she spent the greater part of the day with her relatives, returning to the convent in the evening. But the beginning of the year 1715 found her definitely installed at the Palais-Royal, and on January 15 she appeared in the Regent's box at the Opera, where a ball was in progress. On March 3 she again assisted at an Opera-ball—it must be admitted that Philippe d'Orléans had singular ideas as to the manner in which a young girl of fourteen should be brought up—and, a little later, attended a hunting-party at Marly, under the escort of *Madame*, who would seem to have been very disappointed that her granddaughter had not fulfilled her expectations on the score of beauty. "When she was very young," she writes in June 1715, "I hoped that Mlle. de Valois would be pretty, but I have been very much deceived. She has acquired a great aquiline nose, which has spoiled her. She had formerly the prettiest nose imaginable. The cause of this misfortune is that she has been allowed to take snuff."

During the next two years we hear nothing of Mlle.

de Valois, apart from an occasional announcement by Dangeau that she had accompanied her father to the Opera or her mother to the "Comédie." Beyond escorting her on these occasions, the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans appear to have troubled themselves very little about their daughter, and to have made not the slightest attempt to shield her from the dangers to which young girls were exposed in an age in which virtue had gone altogether out of fashion and modesty was barely tolerated. When, however, Mlle. d'Orléans had refused to sacrifice her vocation on the altar of political expediency by marrying the Prince de Dombes, the Duchesse d'Orléans began to pay far more attention to the young princess, and overwhelmed her with cleverly-simulated demonstrations of affection, hoping by this means to persuade her to accept the position which her elder sister had refused. But, to her profound mortification, Mlle. de Valois offered an equally stubborn resistance, and, though the duchess brought all her batteries into play, and bombarded her with arguments, tears, reproaches, and threats, she stood her ground resolutely. Nothing, she declared, would induce her to wed her cousin.

Unable to triumph over her daughter's resistance, the Duchesse d'Orléans conceived for her the most intense dislike; declared that she could not endure the sight of her, and rendered the unfortunate girl's life at the Palais-Royal perfectly miserable, by her incessant reproaches. "Mlle. de Valois," writes *Madame*, under date September 6, 1716, "is not on good terms with her mother, who wished to persuade her to marry the Prince de Dombes, eldest son of the Duc du Maine. The mother is perpetually reproaching her daughter with the fact that,

if she had married her nephew, the misfortune which had overtaken her brother and his son would not have happened. She cannot endure the sight of her daughter, and has begged me to keep her some time with me."[1] Mlle. de Valois, in consequence, was installed at Saint-Cloud, where she was almost immediately asked in marriage by *Monsieur le Duc*, on behalf of his brother, the Comte de Charolais, that half-crazy prince about whose ferocious depravity so many anecdotes are related. Mlle. de Valois would appear to have regarded the prospect not unfavourably, but her parents were of a different opinion, and declined to give their consent. No doubt, the mere fact that her daughter was well disposed towards her suitor was in itself sufficient to determine the Duchesse d'Orléans to oppose the match.

At Saint-Cloud *Madame* had abundant opportunities of studying her granddaughter, and the judgment she formed of both the appearance and character of that young lady was anything but favourable.

" Mlle. de Valois," she writes, " is a brunette ; she has very beautiful eyes, but her nose is villainous and too big. In my opinion, she is not beautiful. There are, however, days when she is not ugly, for she has a fine complexion and a beautiful skin. When she laughs, a long tooth in her upper jaw produces a vile effect. Her figure is short and ugly ; her head sunk in her shoulders ; and what is worse, in my judgment, is the lack of grace that she shows in everything that she does. . . . If she were one of those persons who have no desire to please, I should not be surprised at her neglecting herself to this degree. But

[1] The misfortune was the decree of August 26, 1718, of which we have spoken elsewhere. See page 163 *supra*.

Charlotte Aglaé d'Orléans (Mlle. de Valois), Hereditary Princess, and afterwards Duchess, of Modena

From the painting by Pierre Gobert, at Versailles

(Photo by W. A. Mansell & Co.)

she loves to be thought pretty; she has some taste for the toilette, and she cannot understand that the best toilette is graceful and distinguished manners, and that, when those are wanting, nothing can supply their place. . . . I have by no means a good opinion of her, and I do not pray for her preservation. She has no good instincts; she cares nothing at all about her mother, and very little for her father; she detests me more than the devil; she is deceitful,[1] untruthful, and horribly coquettish; in short, she will give us all cause for mortification. I wish that she were already married and far away from here; and I should like her to be married to a foreign prince, so that one might hear no more about her."

Notwithstanding the very unflattering portrait which *Madame* traces of her granddaughter, Mlle. de Valois, at this time, appears to have been regarded by her contemporaries as a very agreeable young lady. Without being beautiful or even pretty, she pleased and attracted, since her fine eyes and her dazzling complexion went far to redeem the defects of which her grandmother speaks; while, if her manner towards her relatives was not distinguished by an excessive amiability, she was affable and good-humoured enough towards the rest of the world. Moreover, though of an excessively indolent disposition, she possessed considerable intelligence, which, had she chosen to exercise it, might have resulted in her becoming quite an accomplished princess. What, however, the writer says about her graver moral failings is unhappily only too true, though perhaps coquetry is

[1] Writing in May 1717, *Madame* had said: "Madame d'Orléans would be the most deceitful person in the world, if it were not for her daughter, Mlle. de Valois. She is even worse. I think it is horrible to find such deceitfulness in a person so young."

hardly the term to apply to her part in the romance which we are about to relate.

The little sympathy which *Madame* felt for her granddaughter did not prevent her from doing what she conceived to be her duty by the girl, and during the winter of 1718–19 she frequently escorted her to the Opera, the Comédie-Française, and to various social functions, while she also entertained a good deal at Saint-Cloud for her benefit. It was now that Mlle. de Valois seems first to have made the acquaintance of the too-celebrated Duc de Richelieu, for whom she speedily conceived a passion of the most ardent kind.

Born in 1696, Richelieu was at this time in his twenty-fourth year and already in a fair way to become the most scandalous Lovelace of a scandalous age. "If I believed in sorcery," writes *Madame*, "I should say that this duke must possess some supernatural secret, for he has never found a woman who has opposed to him the least resistance; all run after him; it is truly shameful. He is not, after all, more handsome than other men, and he is so indiscreet and fond of babbling that he has himself declared that if an empress, beautiful as an angel, were enamoured of him and wished to pass the night with him, on condition that he should say nothing about it, he should prefer to forsake her and never see her again so long as he lived. He is a great poltroon,[1] without heart and without soul; it revolts me to think that he is the pet of all the ladies."[2]

[1] This, of course, is quite untrue; Richelieu was one of the most redoubtable duellists of his time and one of the bravest soldiers who ever girded on a sword; indeed, his reputation for courage was second only to his reputation for gallantry.

[2] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of October 1, 1719.

Madame did not exaggerate the infatuation of her sex for this young man. It, indeed, almost passes belief. Citizens' wives, actresses, women of title, nay, even Princesses of the Blood, instead of waiting to be wooed, pursued him with a fervour and persistency which was as ridiculous as it was indecent. "They solicited the honour of being dishonoured; and, shocking to relate, more than one woman surrendered herself, not from the intoxication of passion, but from the intoxication of pride; more than one woman ruined herself in order to be ruined by him, *and to hear it talked about.* It was, as it were, a competition of scandal, as a joust of immodesty."[1]

If we are to believe Soulavie, it was no uncommon thing for Richelieu's confidential *valet de chambre*, whose post must have been an exceedingly lucrative one, to find himself entrusted with as many as ten or a dozen letters, each inviting his master to a rendezvous for the same evening. The duke, he adds, did not take the trouble to open all these *poulets*, since the majority of them were usually in cypher and took some time to transcribe, but contented himself by opening that of the lady whom he wished to visit. The others he locked up in his desk, without even breaking the seals, and left them for the perusal of the historians of his time who have had access to his papers. Since his sense of honour where the opposite sex was concerned was practically non-existent, he derived a cynical amusement from making game of the passion of these foolish women, and often despatched, as though by mistake, to one whose favours he did not happen to desire the *billet doux* of some more happy rival. This procedure naturally led to bitter quarrels between as-

[1] Lescure, *les Maîtresses du Régent.*

pirants to the ducal affections, and in March 1719 two high-born dames, the Marquise de Nesle and the Comtesse de Polignac, fought a duel for the possession of his heart—with knives in the Pré-aux-Clercs, according to Buvat, with pistols in the Bois de Boulogne, according to Soulavie—for which they were subsequently banished by the Regent to their country-houses.

At the time when he appears to have attracted the notice of Mlle. de Valois, Richelieu's attention was principally occupied by that young lady's cousin, Louise Anne de Bourbon-Condé, Mlle. de Charolais, the third of the six sisters of the Duc de Bourbon, all of whom had inherited the good looks of their mother, *Madame la Duchesse* the elder. Mlle. de Charolais, however, was undoubtedly the flower of the flock; in fact, she was generally regarded as one of the prettiest women at the Court. "The charms of her countenance," writes Rulhière, "surpassed all that painters have been able to conceive;"[1] while Bésenval declares that "Nature had lavished upon her a thousand perfections," and that she possessed "eyes of such wondrous beauty that at the ball they shone through her mask and caused her always to be recognised."[2]

Mlle. de Charolais loved Richelieu with an all-consuming passion, to which the duke, whose senses were pleased by her beauty, and whose vanity was naturally flattered by the preference of a Princess of the Blood, had not been slow to respond; and for the past three years she had been his mistress. She certainly was a very devoted one, for when, in February 1716, the duke was sent to the Bastille

[1] Rulhière, *Anecdotes sur le Maréchal de Richelieu.*
[2] *Mémoires.*

for the second time,[1] as a punishment for having fought a midnight duel with the Comte de Gacé in the Rue Saint Thomas-du-Louvre, she and her elder sister, the Princesse de Conti, who is also believed to have been honoured by Richelieu's regard, contrived to gain admittance to the imprisoned nobleman on several occasions, disguised as two charitable women who had permission to visit the poorer prisoners. On the death of Richelieu's neglected wife, Anne Catherine de Noailles, in the following autumn, many were of opinion that he and Mlle. de Charolais would take advantage of the former's freedom to regularize a connection which was by this time the talk of Paris; and it is certain that, had the decision rested with the parties themselves, they would have lost no time in fulfilling this anticipation. For the lady was madly in love with the duke; and the duke, if he did not altogether reciprocate the lady's passion, was keenly alive to the advantages which would accrue to him from his marriage with a Princess of the Blood. But the pride of the Condés proved an insurmountable obstacle; and, though the enamoured princess employed every possible persuasion to induce her relatives to relent, they remained inexorable. However, she did not abandon all hope of ultimately overcoming their opposition, and, in the meanwhile, since she was not permitted to love with the sanction of the Church, continued to do so without it.

Although the charms of Mlle. de Valois compared

[1] His first *embastillement* had taken place in April 1711, when he was barely fifteen, not, as is commonly supposed, owing to the resentment of Louis XIV. at his presumptuous advances to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, but at the request of his father, whom he had exasperated by a whole series of delinquencies, of which the famous adventure in the Dauphine's bedchamber was only one.

unfavourably with those of her cousin, she was of even more exalted station, and M. de Richelieu was not the man to despise a conquest which promised to enhance so much his already great reputation as a *vainqueur de dames.* He did not, however, consider it at all necessary to be off with the old love before being on with the new; and, while paying court to the daughter of the Regent, was far from neglecting the daughter of the Condés, who still remained in ignorance of a treason which was the talk of the Court. At length, however, she was undeceived.

The story goes that one evening, while playing cards at Saint-Cloud, Richelieu, seeking under the table for the feet of Mlle. de Valois, between which and his own very tender communications had been established, addressed, all unwittingly, his imprudent caresses to those of her unfortunate rival, who, " though devoured by jealousy, had the patience to continue this game for a long while, in order to gauge the strength of his passion." At the conclusion of the rubber, however, she " rose like a Fury, with flashing eyes which seemed about to leap from her head, and, under the pretext of indisposition, retired to her apartments, to storm with anger and spite against Mlle. de Valois, leaving the duke much disconcerted at the consequences of his mistake, and with little desire, for that evening at least, to resume his communications with his new inamorata."[1] What made the incident the more piquant, was that Mlle. de Valois, who did not understand that Richelieu had made a mistake, and believed that he had really intended these demonstrations of affection for her cousin, was even more indignant than the other. Singularly enough, neither of the

[1] Soulavie, *Mémoires du duc de Richelieu.*

princesses testified any resentment against the duke, who was deceiving them both, but they vowed eternal enmity against one another, and showed it in the most public manner, to the great diversion of the Court.

The Regent, who, though he had perforce tolerated the misconduct of the Duchesse de Berry, had no intention of extending a similar indulgence to her younger sister, was as angry as his indolent character would permit, nor was his wrath mitigated by the fact that Richelieu was an adherent of the party of the Bastards and an assiduous frequenter of the little Court of Sceaux. He accordingly determined to give the audacious gallant a broad hint as to the possible consequences of his presumption; and one evening, at a masked ball, having perceived Mlle. de Valois in conversation with a gentleman who was wearing a domino very closely resembling that which he had ascertained Richelieu was to assume for the occasion, he approached and said to him: "Mask, be careful, if you do not wish to go a third time to the Bastille." The person addressed, who happened to be one of Richelieu's friends, Montconseil by name, hastened to undeceive his Royal Highness, upon which the prince added in a threatening tone: "Tell, then, your friend Richelieu what I have just told you, under the impression that you were he."[1]

Partly to distract attention from his intrigue with Mlle. de Valois, and partly to avenge himself for the opposition of her father, Richelieu carried off the actress la Souris, the Regent's mistress of the moment. But Philippe d'Orléans showed himself little moved by this

[1] Soulavie, *Mémoires de duc du Richelieu.*

misfortune, and promptly consoled himself with another daughter of Thespis, Mlle. Émilie.

Throughout the winter of 1719 Mlles. de Charolais and de Valois continued their little comedy ; the one striving to win back her faithless gallant, the other to wrest him altogether from the faltering clasp of her cousin, both seemingly oblivious to the fact that Richelieu was " providing them each day with new rivals." But, one fine morning at the end of March, they, in common with a great many other ladies, were stricken to the heart by the terrible news that the gates of the Bastille had closed upon their idol for the third time, and on this occasion for an infinitely more serious offence than those which had resulted in his previous incarcerations.

Although Richelieu, as we have mentioned, was an adherent of the faction of the Bastards, he had taken no part in the Cellamare conspiracy, the discovery of which at the end of the previous year had led to the arrest and imprisonment of the Duc and Duchesse du Maine and their principal supporters. But, early in 1719, he was rash enough to engage in a little conspiracy on his own account, and, seduced by the promises of the Spanish Minister, Alberoni, agreed to facilitate the taking of Bayonne, where the regiment of which he was colonel was stationed, by the troops of Philip V.

Unhappily for him, the emissary whom Alberoni had employed in his negotiations with Richelieu, an Italian adventurer named Marini, had sold his services to the French Government, with the result that the entire correspondence fell into the hands of the Lieutenant of Police d'Argenson and Dubois. Little suspecting the trap into which he had fallen, on March 28 Richelieu

went to the Minister of War, Le Blanc, " made a thousand protestations of devotion, and pressed him to give him permission to go and rejoin his regiment."[1] Later on the same day, however, he received intelligence which must have caused him considerable alarm. The Regent, who was, of course, kept informed of the progress of this affair, was indiscreet enough to let fall some words which implied that M. de Richelieu had got himself into very serious trouble. Mlle. de Valois, who was informed by her mother of this, became very uneasy, and lost no time in dispatching her confidential waiting-woman, Madame Piché, to the Hôtel de Richelieu, with a letter which Soulavie has preserved for us, and of which conscientious historians will prefer to leave to him the responsibility, although, as M. de Barthélemy points out, it is only fair to observe that its orthography bears a remarkable resemblance to that of the numerous letters of the lady in the Archives des Affaires Étrangères :

" As you have assured me that there could be no proof against you,[2] I do not doubt that the warning I am giving you will be useless. But, since it has appeared to me that you like to be informed of everything, I have warned you : the assembly of the Council is to consider the Spanish business. I reckon on knowing more this evening, which I will communicate to you ; but what urges me to write to you, is something which has escaped my mother, who was under the impression that I knew it, and who, when she perceived that I did not, recommended me strongly to say nothing about it. Write me, if you are without uneasiness, for I confess that I am so no longer."[3]

[1] *Correspondance complète de Madame, duchesse d'Orléans*, March 30.
[2] She means in connection with the Cellamare affair.
[3] Soulavie, *Mémoires du duc de Richelieu.*

This letter was followed, a few hours later, by another, in which the princess warned the duke that her father had just said publicly that he had in his possession documents which contained the most damning evidence of the plots which had been formed against him.

Richelieu had now very little doubt that he had been betrayed by Marini, and all uncertainty was removed when, at ten o'clock the following morning (March 29), while he was still in bed, Duchevron, the Provost's lieutenant, with a dozen archers, arrived at his hôtel, and, scarcely giving him time to dress, conducted him to the Bastille. "A letter from Alberoni to this duke [Richelieu] has been intercepted," writes *Madame*, "which renders his treason clearer than the day. My son has caused him to be arrested and to be taken immediately to the Bastille. This duke will cause many tears to flow in Paris, for all the ladies are in love with him; I do not understand why, for he is a little toad, in whom I find nothing agreeable."[1]

If M. de Richelieu's escapade had occurred while Louis XIV. was still on the throne, the duke would probably have paid for it with his head, as the Chevalier de Rohan did in 1674, or at least have remained a close prisoner in the Bastille for the rest of his days. Happily for him, his fate was in the hands of Dubois and the Regent, who both inclined to clemency, the one by system, the other by calculation. Happily, too, the public generally was disposed to regard the intrigues of a young "*méchant*," whose follies were the talk of every café and *cabaret* in Paris, as a subject for merriment rather than for indignation, since, according to the testimony of all

[1] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of March 30, 1719.

his contemporaries, it was entirely unconnected with the real conspiracy, of which Sceaux was the rendezvous and the theatre. Thus, an affair which, at first sight, appeared very grave, and likely to entail serious consequences for its author, soon assumed a different aspect; and, after being treated for a time with some approach to severity, the captive was transferred from the bare and gloomy chamber in which he had been originally confined to a comfortable apartment on the second floor, and given some books, a backgammon-board, and a violoncello, to beguile the tedium of his enforced leisure.

These concessions he probably owed to the good offices of his feminine adorers at the Court, and more particularly to those of Mlles. de Charolais and de Valois. No sooner did they learn of the arrest of the duke, than the two princesses, hitherto so furiously jealous of one another, agreed to forget their rivalry for the nonce, and to join forces for the rescue of their common idol. The Regent, on his side, declared that it was his intention to have Richelieu brought to trial as a State criminal, adding that the Government had sufficient evidence in its possession to cost the duke four heads, if he had them.[1]

These threats, which, it is needless to say, he had no intention of carrying into effect, threw the princesses into a terrible state of alarm; and Mlle. de Charolais, in order to spur her cousin to the most desperate exertions, actually went so far as to promise her that she would never try to see Richelieu again, if Mlle. de Valois succeeded in obtaining his pardon from the Regent.

That lady scarcely needed any such incitement to persuade her to move Heaven and earth on behalf of her

[1] Duclos, *Mémoires secrets*.

imprisoned gallant, and she seems to have given her father a very unpleasant time, "quarrelling with him, demanding the duke's liberation publicly, and threatening to make a scandal, or commit some act of folly, if he were not soon released from his prison."[1] Mlle. de Charolais energetically seconded her efforts, and told the Regent, who was one of her *soupirants*, that "she refused to see him, since he had sent the duke to the Bastille."[2]

To the despair of the two princesses, however, Philippe d'Orléans pretended to be inexorable, and declared that Richelieu's treason merited the scaffold, and that he was determined to bring him to trial.

The object of the ladies' solicitude seems to have been much less disquieted as to the fate in store for him. He read the latest romances; dined twice a week with the governor; played upon his 'cello; stood at his window and sang duets with Mlle. de Launay, the Duchesse du Maine's sprightly young waiting-woman, who was lodged in a room in the same tower; and every afternoon, after making an elaborate toilette, promenaded on the terrace of the Bastille, "when all the ladies assembled in the street to gaze at this beautiful image."[3]

Mlle. de Valois was without doubt among these ladies, but she did not confine herself to such platonic visits. Aware that, in 1716, Mlle. de Charolais had made use of a golden key to unlock the doors of Richelieu's prison, she resolved to follow her example; and Soulavie affirms that she employed a large sum of money which her father had lately given her in corrupting the warders of the Bastille, in order to gain admission to the fortress. The same

[1] *Mémoires du duc de Richelieu.*
[2] *Correspondance complète.* [3] *Ibid.*

writer relates that the two princesses came together to see the duke at night, "bringing with them candles, flint and steel, sweetmeats, and plenty of bank-notes in case of need"; and that the prisoner concerted with them the answers that he should make on the morrow to the insidious questions of Le Blanc and d'Argenson.

Since the late autumn of the preceding year, Mlle. de Valois had been, as we have mentioned, living at Saint-Cloud with her grandmother, who, however, brought her almost every day to Paris to visit or assist at some social function. The surveillance which the old princess had exercised over her charge had been far from severe, and she had treated her with extreme indulgence; and her wrath may therefore be imagined when she learned to what extent she had been deceived, and how hopelessly the girl had succeeded in compromising herself with "that accursed Duc de Richelieu."

After a violent scene, she sent her granddaughter back to her mother, much to the disgust of that lady, and firmly refused to receive her again; and in a letter to one of her German friends she pours out her feelings in language "which," observes Barthélemy, "leaves us, unfortunately, no doubt about the pranks of Mlle. de Valois."[1]

"You ask me," she writes, "what has recently caused me so much indignation. I cannot relate it in detail, but only as a whole. It is the frightful coquetry of Mlle. de Valois with that accursed Duc de Richelieu, who has shown people the letters he has received from her, for he only loves her from motives of vanity. All the young nobles of the Court have been able to see these letters, in which

[1] *Les Filles du Régent.*

she gives him rendezvous. Her mother wished me to have her back with me, which I flatly refused; but she does not cease to return to the charge, and I am horribly vexed; the human race makes me shudder. I cannot endure the idea of seeing Mlle. de Valois again, and I must do it, in order to avoid a very painful scandal. The sight of this madcap will make me ill. All this is the result of the apathy and fatuity of the mother. May God forgive her! But she has brought her daughter up very badly." And she concludes by a violent tirade against Richelieu, whom, she declares, "she detests with all her heart, and would see without shedding a tear hanging from a gibbet."[1]

The Regent, on his side, was becoming seriously perturbed at the conduct of the young princess, since he had no desire to see another of his daughters emulating the exploits of the Duchesse de Berry, and, if he appeared to close his eyes, it was in order to avoid the necessity of taking steps which would only have increased the scandal. At the same time, he was fully resolved to rid himself of this "madcap" with as little delay as might be, by arranging a marriage for her with some foreign prince, and packing her off to Germany or Italy, where her peccadilloes would be her husband's affair, and not his, and, as *Madame* observes, "one would no longer hear her talked about."

Already there had been a question of several marriages for her, and when, towards the end of the previous summer, Provana, the Ambassador of Victor Amadeus II. of Savoy, King of Sicily, had come to propose the Quadruple Alliance, he had suggested a marriage between his

[1] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of May 13, 1719.

master's heir, the Prince of Piedmont, and Mlle. de Valois. This marriage appears to have been under consideration for some months, though, for political reasons, it did not altogether commend itself to the Regent; while Dubois was strongly opposed to it. The latter, if we are to believe Saint-Simon, unwilling to incur the odium of breaking off the negotiations, had recourse to a characteristic expedient. He knew that *Madame* was warmly attached to her step-daughter, the Queen of Sicily, and corresponded with her regularly; also that recent events had greatly irritated the old lady against Mlle. de Valois. Without appearing in the matter himself, for *Madame* detested him heartily, he caused her to be informed of what was in the wind, "in the hope of some flash of German ferocity." He was not disappointed.

"*Madame*," says Saint-Simon, "was in the habit of writing every week to the Queen of Sicily. She told her, without any circumlocution, that she had ascertained that the question of a marriage between the Prince of Piedmont and Mlle. de Valois was being seriously discussed; that she loved her too much to wish to make her so worthless a present and to deceive her; that she therefore warned her, and so forth; and she related to her forthwith all that she knew, or believed that she knew. Then, when the letter had been despatched, and it was beyond any one's power to have it stopped and seized, she informed the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans of all that it contained. The latter was exasperated, but the Duc d'Orléans, who had never been favourably disposed towards the affair, and much less since it had been remitted to the Abbé Dubois, did nothing but laugh. Dubois laughed also, and much more heartily, at this sudden and

surprising result of his craft. And thus this marriage came to nothing."

However, at the end of the summer of 1719, rumours of an alliance between Mlle. de Valois and another prince from beyond the Alps began to spread at the Court and rapidly gathered consistency.

The *parti* in question was Francesco d'Este, Hereditary Prince of Modena, son of Duke Rinaldo and Charlotte Félicité of Brunswick-Hanover, and was at this time twenty-two years of age. *Madame,* who was not unnaturally inclined to regard any one who was desirous of taking her granddaughter off her relatives' hands through rose-coloured spectacles, tells us that he was " very favourably spoken of " ; that he " possessed ability and high principles," and that, although he could not be called handsome, he was " well brought up and very sensible." But, as we shall presently see, he was, though well-meaning enough, a poor sort of creature, and the very last person in the world to inspire either affection or respect in a romantic, high-spirited and self-willed young woman like Mlle. de Valois.

It was the Marchese Rangoni Machiavelli, the Modenese Minister at Versailles, who had first conceived the idea of this union and suggested it himself to the Regent, with whom he had succeeded in ingratiating himself " by a witty cynicism and by the employment of the buffooneries of his nation."[1] That prince received the proposition very favourably, for both on political and private grounds the match was one to be desired. It would rally Modena, which of recent years had been alternately the ally of the Empire and France, definitely to the side of the latter,

[1] Lemontey, *les Filles du Régent, Revue retrospective*, Série I, tom. I

and, at the same time, disembarrass him in a decorous manner of a daughter whose vagaries were threatening to become a public scandal.

Machiavelli duly advised his Court of the result of his overtures, and the Conte di Salvatico was deputed to proceed to France as Envoy Extraordinary and make the formal demand for the hand of Mlle. de Valois. At the outset, Salvatico came near to ruining everything, since he was so ill-advised as to address his request to the King through the medium of his Majesty's *gouverneur*, the Maréchal de Villeroy, instead of through Dubois, which so irritated that important personage that he began to raise all kinds of difficulties. Salvatico, however, realizing his mistake, hastened to repair it, with true Italian adroitness, and begged Dubois's acceptance of five valuable paintings, among which was a work by Paul Veronese. This timely gift proved an effective solatium for the Minister's wounded *amour-propre*, and matters proceeded so smoothly that in a few days nothing remained but to obtain the consent of the lady.

This, as may be anticipated, proved no easy task, since the princess, more and more enamoured of Richelieu, obstinately refused to listen to any matrimonial proposition, much less to one which would entail her removal to so great a distance from her idol; and the Regent soon perceived that the only hope of persuading her to accept the Prince of Modena as a husband, and relieve the French Court of her presence, was to work upon her affection for her captive lover in such a way that she should be willing to expatriate herself for his sake.

Richelieu had now been in the Bastille for nearly five months, and, notwithstanding the representations of his

late wife's uncle, the Cardinal de Noailles, who declared that he was in a very precarious state of health, and the entreaties and reproaches of Mlles. de Charolais and de Valois, the Regent resolutely refused to hear of his liberation. Moreover, towards the end of August, he adroitly let fall a hint that fresh documents had recently come to light which made the case against the prisoner even more grave than it already was. This had the effect of driving the two princesses to the last extremity of despair; and Philippe d'Orléans, perceiving that the psychological moment had arrived, played his trump card, and offered his daughter the liberty of Richelieu on condition that she would wed the Prince of Modena.

For some days the young princess hesitated, for the price demanded of her was a heavy one, including as it did not only the renunciation of her lover, but of her country as well—separation from Paris and the Court, beside which all the rest of the world was but an aching void. But, with all her faults, she was a generous-hearted girl, who deserved a better fate than to have bestowed her affections upon one so little capable of appreciating them; and when she recognised that her father would never yield on any other terms, and that the condition of the prisoner's health—the duke had been suffering from dysentery—was causing the doctors who attended him real anxiety, she ended by consenting.

The Regent lost no time in fulfilling his share of the bargain, and on August 30 Richelieu was liberated from the Bastille, with orders to repair to the country-house of the Cardinal de Noailles, and remain there until his Majesty's further pleasure should be known.

Overjoyed at regaining his freedom, the duke quitted

his gloomy prison and repaired to Conflans. But he did not consider it necessary to obey the latter part of the royal command, and intelligence soon reached the Regent that, when night fell, M. de Richelieu was in the habit of scaling the walls of the garden and making his way to Paris, returning, however, before his absence could be discovered; and that, on these nocturnal excursions, it was shrewdly suspected that he had paid more than one visit to Mlle. de Valois,[1] and had also been entertained by a lady who was at that moment very near his Royal Highness's heart.

The consequence was that, on September 10, the duke was commanded to betake himself to a house belonging to him at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, one Dulibois, a retired colonel of dragoons, being deputed to accompany him, and to remain with him until recalled by his Majesty. But this change of residence was far from curing the young gentleman of his propensity for midnight travel, for light carriages and swift horses were easy enough to procure; and the worthy ex-dragoon was a convivial soul, who found M. de Richelieu's wine so much to his liking that, when bedtime arrived, he was seldom in a condition to account for his own actions, let alone for those of his charge.

Detection and a *lettre de cachet* exiling him to

[1] If we are to believe Bésenval, the duke's resourcefulness enabled him to gain access to his inamorata whenever he desired. "The apartments of Mlle. de Valois at the Palais-Royal," he writes, "abutted, on the side of the Rue de Richelieu, on a neighbouring house, the wall of which was merely a partition. M. de Richelieu rented this house, caused the wall corresponding to the cabinet of Mlle. de Valois to be pierced, and had a door constructed, which was hidden by a great cupboard, where the princess kept her preserves. Master of this means of approaching Mlle. de Valois, I leave you to judge if he did not constantly take advantage of it."—*Mémoires*.

Richelieu, in Poitou, came towards the end of October; but this new banishment, though it put an effectual check on any further surreptitious visits to Paris, did not prevent him from maintaining an active correspondence with Mlle. de Valois, in which he exhorted her to decline to fulfil the promise her father had extracted from her. In consequence, the princess, who, according to *Madame*, had appeared more resigned to her fate, since she had seen the ravishing toilettes which were being made for her,[1] and the beautiful diamonds which had been sent from Modena, began to evince an increasing repugnance to the marriage, and "although her conversation was gay and animated, her eyes were always red, and one saw clearly that she passed the night in weeping."

The doleful appearance of the princess was not lost upon the public, and many were the *chansons* to which it gave rise, of which the following will serve as an example:

> "J'espouse un des plus petits princes,
> Maître de très petits États,
> Et qui pour ne valent pas
> Une de nos moindres provinces.
> L'on y manque de tout, la finance est petite.
> Quelle différence, grand Dieu!
> Entre ce triste et pauvre lieu
> Et le riche lieu [Richelieu] que je quitte."

Richelieu is believed to have cherished the hope of persuading Mlle. de Valois to break off the match and of marrying her himself. But, after a while, he came to the conclusion that the Regent would scarcely be disposed to tolerate as a son-in-law a gentleman who had been guilty

[1] *Madame* says that she had forty different costumes; Buvat that she had sixty, fifteen for each season of the year.

of high treason, and that the most probable result of following in the footsteps of the Chevalier de Rion would be a fourth and indefinite sojourn in the Bastille, if not a still more unpleasant fate. An ardent lover might have been prepared to brave even these dangers, but vanity and self-interest had counted for far more in Richelieu's *liaison* with the princess than sentiment; and so his letters to her grew gradually fewer and less tender, and at length ceased altogether. This no doubt explains why, towards the end of the year, Mlle. de Valois, who had for some time past refused to share in any of the gaieties of the Court, reappeared at her mother's card-parties and other social functions, and seemed altogether more resigned to her approaching marriage.

The preliminaries of that event were soon settled, for, for different reasons, the relatives on both sides were at one in their desire to hasten it. On November 26, the articles of the marriage-contract, which had been sent to Modena for approval, were returned, having been accepted without any comment; on the 28th, the Regent officially informed the King that everything was satisfactorily arranged; and the same evening the courtiers were authorized to pay their compliments to the family of the bride-elect.

The date originally decided upon for the marriage was January 25, 1720, but, owing, Dangeau tells us, to an oversight on the part of the Bishop of Modena, who had omitted some formality for the publication of the banns in that town, it was found necessary to postpone it until Monday, February 12; the departure of the bride being fixed for the following Thursday. And the chronicler adds: "She has not yet been informed of the day on

which she must set out, from fear of distressing her ; in proportion as the time of her departure draws nearer, her grief increases."

In point of fact, either because Richelieu had repented of his prudent resolutions and had resumed his correspondence with her, or, more probably, because of her natural reluctance to expatriate herself, Mlle. de Valois had begun once more to reveal the aversion with which she regarded her approaching marriage in a manner that was apparent to every one, and which, says *Madame,* " occasions me truly great distress." She exhausted every pretext that she could imagine to defer her departure, but Salvatico made such strong representations on the subject to Dubois that all her efforts proved fruitless.

On January 31, 1720, the marriage-contract was signed. The King gave the bride a *dot* of 900,000 livres ; the Regent one of 200,000, and jewels to the same value, which included a parure of nine diamond and emerald clasps, and a knot of the same jewels. On February 11, at six o'clock in the evening, the betrothal ceremony took place in the King's cabinet at the Tuileries, the Duc de Chartres representing the Prince of Modena. The Cardinal de Rohan officiated, and Mlle. de Montpensier, the future Queen of Spain, held the train of her sister's mantle. At the conclusion of the ceremony the little Louis XV. went to the Palais-Royal, to take formal leave of the princess, and presented her with a magnificent necklace of pearls and diamonds.

At noon on the following day, the marriage was celebrated in the chapel of the Tuileries, by the Cardinal de Rohan, and immediately afterwards the King, according to custom, conducted the bride to her carriage and,

addressing the coachman, said: "*A Modène.*" And the guards and officers who were to escort her to Modena had orders to follow her carriage, just as if she were really starting for Modena at that moment.

The same day, the Marquis de Sabran, husband of the Regent's former inamorata, started for Modena, with the news of the celebration of the marriage, bearing the following note from the princess to her husband:

"The ceremony, Monsieur, which has just taken place gives me to you, and my heart does not disavow it. I am setting out to begin with you a union which ought to make the happiness of my life, and which it is my ardent desire may contribute to yours."[1]

[1] Buvat relates some piquant anecdotes concerning the Prince of Modena which were going the round of Paris.

"We are assured that this princess (Mlle. de Valois) has already aroused an extraordinary jealousy between the Prince of Modena, her future husband, and the Prince Jean Frédéric Clément, his brother, who is two years younger than he, the elder having been born on July 2, 1698, and the younger on the first day of September 1700. It is attributed to the sight of the portrait of this princess, the beauties of which charmed the two brothers, as well as all the persons of the Court of Modena who had the pleasure of seeing the portrait, which represented her in a state of nature. They wished to make out that the younger did not refrain from expressing his sentiments, and declared publicly that the Princess of Orléans, whom his brother François Marie was about to espouse, was the most beautiful woman who had ever appeared in Italy, as she was in the world; that she could not fail to captivate the hearts of all who saw her or might see her, and that he could not refuse her his, although he had only seen her on canvas. This having been reported to the Prince François Marie, did not fail to arouse a jealousy so violent that he persuaded the Duke of Modena, his father, that, for the sake of peace, it was necessary to banish the Prince Jean Frédéric and order him to retire to Rome, where he has been these two months, to divert himself."

And Buvat adds: "It is also said, in anticipation, that jealousy will not fail to oblige the princess, soon after her arrival, to submit to the law that this passion has established there, as well as in the other Courts of Italy, and even among persons of less distinguished rank, and to wear a kind of padlock, the key of which is scrupulously guarded by the husband."—*Journal de la Régence*, February 1720.

The illness of the Duchesse de Villars, who had been selected to accompany her to Italy, as the representative of Louis XV.,[1] necessitated the departure of the princess being postponed for some days beyond the date originally fixed, namely from the 14th to the 21st. This respite, needless to say, proved a most welcome one to her Highness, who, on her wedding-day, had had "more the air of a victim who was being dragged to the sacrifice, than of a princess who walks to the altar of Hymen;"[2] and even *Madame*, who, as we have seen, had little sympathy for her granddaughter, was moved to compassion. "I have never seen so sad a bride," she writes, a week after the wedding. "For three days she has neither eaten nor slept; she spends the nights in weeping."

The same day on which this letter was penned, the princess was taken ill, and on the following morning the doctors pronounced her to be suffering from an attack of measles. This malady she undoubtedly owed to her obstinacy in going to Chelles, three days earlier, to take leave of her sister, who was herself suffering from it; and *Madame* asserts that she had insisted on visiting the abbess, between whom and her younger sister there was very little love lost, in the hope of contracting the disease, and thus retarding her departure, even at the risk of her life.

"I have been a prophetess of misfortune," she writes, "and unhappily I have spoken only too truly. When the Princess of Modena told me that she wished to go to

[1] The honour of being accompanied by a lady representing the King, Saint-Simon tells us, had never been accorded before to any but daughters and granddaughters of France.

[2] Bésenval, *Mémoires*.

Chelles to take leave of her sister, I counselled her not to do so, telling her that too short a time had elapsed since they had had small-pox in the convent; that the abbess herself was suffering from measles, and that these diseases are easily contracted. She answered: 'That is what I am seeking.' I said to her: 'Take care; one finds that sooner than something good, and often one's life is in danger.' Despite all I did, she went there on Saturday last and spent the whole day with her sister, the abbess. On Sunday, she was taken ill, and already had the symptoms of measles."

The illness of the princess, which was aggravated by her imprudence, was a somewhat serious one, and on the 25th her condition was decidedly grave. But in the night which followed she took a turn for the better, and thenceforth improved so rapidly that two days later the doctors, to her great annoyance, pronounced her fit to leave her bed, and her departure for Italy was fixed for March 15. The lady, however, much to the astonishment of those who knew the ingenuity she had displayed in inventing pretexts to defer the dreaded moment, insisted on advancing the date and setting out five days earlier, notwithstanding the warnings of the doctors. The reason for this move was that the princess, aware that she would not be sufficiently recovered by the earlier date to start without imprudence, counted on being thus provided with an admirable pretext for prolonging a journey the end of which she regarded with so much repugnance. On the 9th, she went, accompanied by her father and mother, to take leave of *Madame*, who tells us that "she was not in a condition to utter a single word, so much did she weep; she could only take my hands, kiss them, and

squeeze them in hers. She clasped her hands together like a person in despair. My son [the Regent] took her away by force, and with much emotion on his part; he was doing as much violence to his feelings as to hers."

CHAPTER XI

Departure of Mlle. de Valois—Her retinue—Premeditated delays—Incessant quarrels between the French and Italians in her train—Nightly gambling—Orgies—Strained relations between the princess and the Duchesse de Villars: the affair of the *soupcoupe*—The Conte di Salvatico, Envoy Extraordinary of the Duke of Modena—His ridiculous passion for the princess—His love transformed into hatred by her refusal to listen to him—Reception at Lyons—Arrival at Avignon: visit to the Ghetto—Madame de Bacqueville, favourite of the princess—Salvatico writes to the Regent demanding her recall—The Regent consents, but it is decided to conceal this decision from the princess until she has embarked at Antibes—Suspicions of the princess: her letter to her father—Arrival at Antibes—The princess is informed of the recall of her favourite.

EARLY in the afternoon of the following day, the Princess of Modena set out on her journey to Antibes, where she was to embark for Genoa. She was accompanied by a veritable Court, or rather a caravan, numbering over one hundred and fifty persons. The Duchesse de Villars, Madame de Simiane, one of the ladies of the Duchesse d'Orléans, and Mesdames de Bacqueville and de Goyon, occupied seats in her carriage. To these last two ladies, and particularly to Madame de Bacqueville, the princess was greatly attached, and she had demanded and obtained from her father a promise that she should be allowed the consolation of her society at Modena. The Regent accompanied his daughter as far as Essonne, where she was to pass the night, and then took leave of her and returned to Paris, doubtless felicitating himself on having at last got rid of a young lady

who had promised to become a terrible handful. But his responsibilities, as we shall see, were far from being at an end.

On the 12th, the princess arrived at Fontainebleau, where she remained two days, on the pretext of indisposition. This was the beginning of interminable delays, for her Highness availed herself of every conceivable pretext for deferring the dreaded meeting with her husband; while her Court, composed as it was of two nationalities with very little love for one another, was distracted by jealousy and insubordination; and many of the disputes over etiquette which were continually arising were so bitter that it was considered necessary to refer them to the French Court for settlement, and to await its decision before resuming the journey. By March 17 the *cortège* had advanced no farther than Briare, from which town Desgranges, the Master of the Ceremonies, writes to the Regent: "We make slow progress. It is for your Royal Highness to say whether this is expedient for the princess, and accords with the impatience which the prince ought to feel, and with the expense. Yesterday, after stopping for the night, we journeyed for three hours. This is not travelling, and, however anxious the equerry may be to spare his horses, we ought to make a passable day's journey; there are nineteen horses for two carriages. If you write something about our progress, you must not let it be known that I have had the honour of speaking of it to your Royal Highness."[1] "We have news of Madame de Modène from Nevers," writes Dangeau, on March 27. "She continues her journey in a rather leisurely fashion, and when she arrives at the

[1] Archives des Affaires Étrangères, cited by Barthélemy.

places where she is to pass the night, she plays at biribi until three o'clock in the morning,[1] and does not start again until midday."

At Nevers, where she was accorded a magnificent reception and sumptuously lodged, a slight attack of fever furnished the august traveller with an excuse for remaining for the Easter fêtes. Desgranges informed the Regent that the princess had performed her religious duties in a manner that edified all her little Court, which, however, does not seem to have profited much by her example, for though the French conformed regularly enough to the canonical prescriptions, the Italians, "seeing themselves outside their country and deprived of the advantages of hypocrisy,"[2] produced all kinds of dispensations and insisted on being served *en gras* throughout Holy Week. Moreover, no sooner had they heard Mass, than they all hurried off to play biribi, and gambled until the small hours of the following morning.

After remaining a week at Nevers, the princess moved on to Moulins, where another long delay was only pre-

[1] This perpetual gambling was the most unpleasant feature of this singular journey. The bank was held by professional gamblers, who preceded the princess and arranged the tables against her arrival in every town at which she intended to stop. The harm thus done was incalculable, for, though the members of the princess's suite, for the most part hardened gamesters, might be trusted to take care of themselves, this was not the case with the provincial gentry and townsfolk, who, coming to pay their respects to the princess, allowed themselves to be drawn into a game of which they were quite ignorant, with sometimes disastrous consequences. "That famous ship of purple and gold," writes Lemontey, "which bore a courtesan-queen into the arms of Mark Antony, appears to me charged with less opprobrium than this slow itinerary, in which, already corrupted in the flower of her youth and travelling towards throne and altar like a scourge, a princess of eighteen years scattered poison into people's hearts, consternation into families, and that sudden ruin which follows despair and suicide."

[2] Lemontey, *les Filles du Régent.*

vented by the intervention of the Duchesse de Villars, who wrote to the Regent, complaining bitterly of the way everything was being mismanaged, and threatening to return to Paris if she were not invested with full authority. Between this lady and the princess relations had been exceedingly strained almost from the first day of the journey. The duchess pretended that her rank entitled her to share with the latter the honours of the *soupcoupe*, that is to say, to drink from a wine-glass presented on a *soupcoupe*. This the princess absolutely refused to admit, and, to humble the vanity of the duchess, she ceased to dine and sup with her, or, when she was obliged to, abstained from drinking during the whole meal. Madame de Villars followed her example, and decided to die of thirst rather than compromise by so much as a drop of water the pretensions of the duchesses.

The illness of Madame de Simiane, who was found to be suffering from smallpox and had to be left behind, in charge of a doctor who had been summoned from Lyons, detained the travellers three days at La Palisse, and, continuing their leisurely progress, on April 15 they reached Tarare, where they were overtaken by a special courier from the Regent, with a letter for his daughter, in which he informed her that he "was surprised and annoyed at the time she had lost on her journey by too frequent and too long stoppages," and directed her "to give orders that they should make all the speed that could possibly be made without causing her inconvenience." The writer had certainly good reason for his irritation, for, owing to the incessant delays, the expenses of the journey which would, in any circumstances, have

been very great, were rapidly mounting up to a most alarming figure.

The princess, however, troubled herself very little about the paternal indignation, and nothing at all about the French Treasury, which would have to defray the cost of her caprices, and, so far from endeavouring to make up for lost time, she cudgelled her brains to devise fresh pretexts for delay. "Letters are to hand from Madame de Modène," writes Dangeau, on April 19. "She writes from Roanne, and continues her journey very slowly." And he adds: "The Envoy of Modena [the Conte di Salvatico] complains a little of the want of consideration which she has for him: this princess frequently takes her meals quite alone."

This requires some explanation. The Conte di Salvatico was a grotesque personage, with a long, cadaverous face, a scraggy neck, and a ludicrous gait, which resembled hopping rather than walking; while he bent almost double whenever he bowed to any one, and spoke the most detestable French. Notwithstanding all this, he was extremely vain and imagined himself irresistible. No sooner was he presented to Mlle. de Valois, than he became desperately enamoured of her, and the enthusiastic description of her charms which he despatched to Modena no doubt served to communicate something of his ardour to Francesco d'Este. Such was his conceit that he believed in a possible success, and more than once presented himself at the door of her apartments at hours when visitors were not admitted. "So far from endeavouring to conceal his passion," writes *Madame*, "he proclaimed it openly in the salons of Versailles," adding protestations which the pen of that outspoken old lady is alone able to transcribe. *Madame*, by the way, appears

to have regarded Salvatico's infatuation as a rather fortunate circumstance for her granddaughter, since he was the only person able to make known at Modena the reputation she bore in Paris.

This little comedy at first caused Mlle. de Valois considerable amusement, but after a time she began to find it decidedly embarrassing; and when during the journey, despite sundry hints from the princess, Salvatico continued his unwelcome attentions, and at length went so far as to make her a formal declaration of love, at the same time threatening to make her very unhappy if she declined to listen to him, she rebuked him sharply, avoided him as much as possible, and excluded him from her table. Thenceforth, love was transformed into hatred and the one-time adorer into an implacable enemy.

On April 16, the princess arrived at Lyons, where a reception worthy of the second city in the kingdom awaited her. The municipal authorities, in their robes of office, with the Provost of the Merchants at their head, met her at the Porte de Vaise and presented her with the usual hyperbolical address of welcome ; cannon thundered forth salutes ; and " the great number of the bourgeois and the people who were in the streets and at the windows was a public testimony of the eagerness of this town to pay respect to all who bear the august name of our Kings." After all this, her Highness naturally felt that it would be exceedingly ungracious on her part to hasten her departure ; and so she remained a week, receiving deputations, visiting the public buildings and the principal industries of the town, going to the play, and concluding the day with biribi and lansquenet.

On the 23rd, the caravan quitted Lyons, all the cannon

on the ramparts and the arsenal firing a parting salute, and moved slowly on to Vienne. On leaving this town on the 25th, which happened to be the anniversary of her husband's birth, the princess, in honour of the occasion, gave the sum of 10,000 livres for distribution among the poor. It was easy for her to be generous at the expense of the French Treasury, and the sums she dispensed "*pour largesses et aûmones*" in the course of her travels were not the least formidable item when the bill came to be cast up.

May 4 found her at Avignon, where she was lodged in the ancient palace of the Popes. She was very gracious to the Papal officials, and, after visiting the principal churches and convents, expressed her intention of inspecting the Ghetto—it was an excuse for wasting another day—much to the gratification of its inmates. Their gratification, however, was somewhat discounted by the trouble and expense which this honour entailed, for they were required "to cover the filthy streets with sand, to decorate the fronts of their houses, and to scatter flowers and odoriferous herbs on the ground to counteract the evil smells." However, they rose to the occasion nobly, and illuminated their synagogue with six hundred candles, notwithstanding that candles were at this period exceedingly dear, selling at three livres the pound.

After remaining four days at Avignon, the princess continued her journey, accompanied for some distance by Monseigneur d'Eley, the vice-legate, and crossed the Durance at Bompas to reach Marseilles. Her Highness was in a far from amiable humour, for she had reason to suspect that an intrigue was on foot to separate her from her friend and confidante, Madame de Bacqueville.

This Madame de Bacqueville, "a creature without reputation and without morals,"[1] had been an intimate friend of the princess from the latter's childhood, and exercised over her an influence almost as pernicious as that which Madame de Mouchy had exercised over the Duchesse de Berry. During the journey she had never ceased to encourage the princess in all her caprices, even to the length of conducting herself with unseemly levity in church,[2] had sought to embitter the quarrel between her and the Duchesse de Villars, and had mocked openly at the enamoured Salvatico. That personage was deeply incensed against her, and from Valence he addressed a letter to the Regent, throwing all the responsibility for the unreasonable delays that had occurred, the frenzied gambling that went on nightly, "sometimes for seventeen consecutive hours," and the quarrels with the Duchesse de Villars, upon her, and declaring that the presence of such a woman at Modena would ruin his daughter with the Duke, her father-in-law, and entreating him not to allow her to accompany the princess into Italy.

The Regent, to whom other persons had already written in the same sense, at once resolved to retain Madame de Bacqueville in France, and despatched orders to her to that effect; and, by the same courier, a letter to his daughter explaining that his reason for recalling the lady was the strong objection which her family had raised to her expatriating herself. These letters were addressed to Madame de Villars, who was informed of their con-

[1] Lemontey, *les Filles du Régent.*

[2] "What happened yesterday at Romans is altogether extraordinary, where she [Madame de Bacqueville] approached the princess at Mass, and made her laugh and jest, to the great scandal of all the town, and particularly of the confessor [the Abbé Colibeaux], who wept at it" (Letter of Salvatico to the Regent, April 30, 1720).

tents and charged to deliver them. But that lady, knowing the character of the princess and "fearing a terrible scandal," after consultation with Salvatico, begged the Regent to allow her to defer this until the princess had embarked at Antibes, to which he consented.

The princess, however, had, as we have said, a shrewd suspicion of what was in the wind and, before leaving Avignon, she wrote to her father, imploring him "not to crown her despair and her unhappiness by depriving her of the only consolation she could have, and which he had so often promised her." This letter she entrusted to one of her *valets de chambre*, and announced her intention to await the answer at Marseilles; but at Orgon orders were received from the Regent formally forbidding her to pass through Marseilles. Nevertheless, she insisted on spending a day there, and then decided to go to Toulon, where she assisted at the launching of a ship, and thence to Fréjus.

"The Duchess of Hanover," writes *Madame*, "has no need to hurry to see her new granddaughter, our demoiselle de Valois, who is in not the least hurry to reach Modena. She is a person singularly fanciful and wilful; without paying any attention to the pressing recommendations of her father, she intends to make a tour through the whole of Provence, and to visit Toulon, which is altogether out of her way. She intends also to go to Saint-Baume. She troubles not the least about all the expense which this entails, and which falls upon her father. This greatly irritates me, although the father and the mother deserve to receive nothing but mortification from their daughter, so much have they spoiled her. I have seen many wrong-headed women, but I have never

found one so bad as this; the blood of the Montespan shows itself plainly in her. But it is not my fault, and I can say to my son, as in the play: '*Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin.*'"[1]

The messenger whom the princess had despatched to Paris did not bring back any answer to the letter with which he had been entrusted, which confirmed her suspicions on the subject of Madame de Bacqueville; and she questioned the Duchesse de Villars, to whom she had thought it advisable to apologize for her haughtiness during the journey, as to whether she had received any orders from the Regent in regard to that lady. The duchess, dreadfully embarrassed, replied that, if she had received any such order, she would have communicated it to her. Upon which the princess observed that, although Madame de Villars might cherish justifiable grievances against her, she did not believe that she would deceive her. Later in the day, she asked Salvatico for a list of those whom she was to take with her to Modena; and that gentleman, not daring to omit the name of Madame de Bacqueville, wrote it down at the head, and then hurried off to Madame de Villars, to protest that he had only done this to avoid a scandal, and to beg her to deliver the Duke of Modena from a person who "would cause him to die of grief." The duchess rated the Italian sharply for his pusillanimity, and accused him of wishing to throw all the odium of the deception upon her, but, nevertheless, consented to continue it.

Finally, on May 28, they reached Antibes, having occupied eleven weeks to accomplish a journey which, with reasonable expedition, would not have needed more

[1] *Correspondance complète*, Letter of June 16, 1720.

than a month, and at five o'clock on the following afternoon the Princess of Modena went on board the galley which was to convey her to Genoa. When darkness fell, this vessel and the squadron which was to escort it, which included two Sardinian galleys, were brilliantly illuminated.

Once safely on board, it was necessary to acquaint the princess with the order recalling Madame de Bacqueville, and to give her her father's letters. The execution of this unpleasant duty was postponed until the morrow, in order that the Princess of Monaco, who had come to visit her and had remained to supper, "might not be a witness of her grief." But when the critical moment arrived, the courage of the Duchesse de Villars failed her completely, and she begged the princess's half-brother, the Chevalier d'Orléans,[1] who commanded the galleys, to take her place. The chevalier consented, but he does not appear to have had much relish for the commission, for it was not until they had been two days at sea that he could bring himself to discharge it.

To the great relief of Madame de Villars, the storm which she had so much dreaded did not break, and the grief of the princess at the separation from her confidante, "although extreme, was very gentle"; she refrained from addressing any reproaches to the duchess for her part in the deception which had been practised upon her, and wrote to her "*cher papa*" that, "notwithstanding that his orders had crowned her unhappiness and her despair, she knew only how to obey him, even if he demanded her life."

[1] Jean Philippe d'Orléans (1702–1748), natural son of the Regent, by the Comtesse d'Argenton. He was General of the Galleys and Grand Prior of France.

The fact is that her Highness had had the sense to comprehend that, although Philippe d'Orléans might be the most long-suffering of fathers, she must by this time have pretty well exhausted his indulgence, and that to alienate him altogether would be the height of folly, in view of the fact that she would have to reckon with a dangerous enemy at the Court of Modena, in the person of the egregious Salvatico, who would be certain to do everything in his power to injure her with the Duke. She had therefore judged it prudent to resign herself to the sacrifice of her unworthy favourite, for whom she merely demanded a pension. This request was immediately granted, and Madame de Bacqueville was accorded a pension of 6000 livres, "to console her for no longer being able to poison a young princess by her counsels and her example."[1] About the same time, the Duchesse de Villars received one of double that amount, presumably to compensate her for the bickerings over the *soupcoupe*. One would perhaps have thought it would have been possible to find a better use for the public money.

[1] Lemontey, *les Filles du Régent*.

CHAPTER XII

Arrival at Genoa—Unpleasantness over the payment of the princess's dowry: impertinent conduct of Salvatico—Departure for Modena—The Duke of Modena and his two sons meet the princess at Reggio—Portrait of Francesco d'Este—Character of the Duke—Deadly monotony of his Court—Persecution of the princess by Salvatico—The princess falls ill of smallpox—Singular conjugal relations—Letters of the Abbé Colibeaux, confessor to the princess, on this delicate subject—Chavigny, French Minister at Genoa, sent by the Regent to verify the facts—His report—Severity of the Duke towards the young couple—Pilgrimage to Loretto—The princess persuades her husband to fly with her to France—Her letter to her father—The Regent refuses to receive them, and despatches the Abbé Philibert to persuade them to return—Despair of the princess—Her return to Modena—Mortifying reception—Salvatico resumes his persecution—Ineffectual protests of Chavigny and Philibert—Return of Francesco d'Este—Visit of the prince and princess to Lucca—They take up their residence at a country-house near Reggio—Anguish of the princess on learning of the reported marriage of the Duc de Richelieu—She becomes more reconciled to her lot—Birth of a son.

ON June 3 the squadron arrived off Genoa, but it was not until the evening of the following day that the princess was able to disembark, owing to a difference of opinion between the French officers and the Government of the Most Serene Republic on the question of the salute. Finally, it was arranged that the cannon of the city and of the galleys should fire simultaneously; and a deputation of six Genoese nobles put off to the squadron to bid her Highness welcome and escort her on shore. She landed at ten o'clock at night, and was conducted to the Palazzo Durazzo, where the Modenese ladies and officials charged to receive her

had been waiting for nearly a month. The princess, however, declined to avail herself of their services until the eve of her departure, in order to avoid the disputes over precedence which threatened to ensue between them and her French attendants.

The Genoese Government wished to give a grand ball and other fêtes in honour of their distinguished guest; but the latter declined, as she maintained that she ought to be treated as a Princess of the Blood Royal of France, and not as a Modenese princess. She was, besides, in no humour just then to take part in any festivities; while serious unpleasantness had arisen over the payment of her dowry, which was causing her the keenest mortification. In accordance with custom, the dowry ought to have been paid to Salvatico, as the representative of the Duke of Modena, at the same time as the princess was formally delivered into his charge. But, through some misunderstanding, the French resident at Genoa, the Comte de Chavigny, had received neither the money nor any orders on the subject; and the vindictive Italian, delighted at an opportunity of humiliating the lady who had so contemptuously rejected his adoration, intimated that he should refuse to take charge of her Highness until the dowry was forthcoming. Not content with that, he had the impertinence to present himself at the princess's apartments at midnight, and complain bitterly to the Duchesse de Villars of the failure of the French Court to carry out its obligations. Finally, it was arranged that a courier should be despatched to Modena, to ascertain the wishes of the Duke, as the princess declined to leave Genoa until these were known, declaring,

Francesco d'Este, Hereditary Prince of Modena
(afterwards Francesco II., Duke of Modena)

From an engraving by Cornelius Meysens

with reason, that "it was impossible to deliver her up without knowing whether she were wanted."

The Duke's reply arrived on June 8, and was to the effect that, having every confidence in the word of the King of France, he would receive his daughter-in-law without waiting for the dowry; and at four o'clock on the morning of June 11, the princess, "not without extreme distress," writes Madame de Villars, "bade farewell to that lady and the rest of her French attendants who were returning to France, and took the road to Piacenza, this early start being made to avoid travelling during the heat of the day."

Passing through the Milanese, where every honour was paid her, on June 20 the princess arrived at Reggio, where she found the Duke of Modena and his two sons awaiting her. The Duke hurried to prevent his daughter-in-law alighting, and "addressed to her some very affectionate words; after which the prince advanced, kissed his wife on both cheeks, and seated himself beside her."

The poor girl must have felt her heart sink as she contemplated the man with whom she was probably condemned to spend the rest of her days. She had not expected to find him handsome, although the portrait which had been sent to Paris had represented him as far from unprepossessing; but this short, insignificant-looking youth, with his long, brown face, and melancholy, black eyes, was positively ugly. And then how dull he seemed, how *gauche*, how timid! Beyond mumbling a few banal compliments, like a schoolboy repeating a lesson, he had not a word to say for himself.

The "happy pair" entered the town, escorted by

over a hundred carriages, each drawn by six horses, filled with the nobility of the country, and remained there for several days, while they were entertained to a succession of fêtes. Then they proceeded to Modena, where another flattering reception awaited them; but scarcely had the princess installed herself in her apartments in the imposing Palazzo Ducale, than the Court returned to Reggio, to assist at another round of fêtes.

These festivities served to afford the expatriated princess some distraction, and left her little time for brooding over the separation from all her friends; and on July 24 Dangeau announces that she is "much more pleased with the country than she expected to be." But, once they were over, and the Court of Modena settled down to its ordinary life, she discovered that her worst fears were to be realised. The Duke was an austere, bigoted man, ruled by monks and Jesuits, and lay favourites, who practised, or at any rate affected, an excessive devotion; and his Court was the reflection of his own dull and monotonous existence. It was, indeed, more like a monastery than a Court. Every one was expected to rise very early and attend Mass; dinner was served at an hour when many of the fashionable ladies of Paris and Versailles were sipping their morning chocolate; the usual occupation of the ducal family in the afternoon was a drive, the carriages proceeding at an almost funereal pace; supper was at eight o'clock; and at ten they went to bed. In short, no greater contrast to the gay and feverish life of the Court of France could well be imagined.

To increase the princess's discontent, Salvatico had been appointed Grand Master of the Court, which pro-

vided him with numerous opportunities of making himself unpleasant, of which he did not fail to take every advantage. He claimed the right of entering her apartments at any hour he wished; he is said to have passed a whole night at her door; he intercepted the letters which her relatives and friends in France wrote to her, and actually had the audacity to suppress several from the Regent, in order to create the impression that she had quarrelled with her father; he furnished blind and lame horses for her carriage and pewter for her table, and, in fact, neglected no means of annoying her.

Furious with indignation, she sought the advice of the Abbé Colibeaux, who had remained with her in the quality of confessor. The abbé endeavoured to calm her, pointing out that Salvatico was protected by the Jesuits, who ruled the Duke, and that it would be most imprudent to make enemies of them. She declined to listen to him and complained to her husband, who spoke to his father "and besought him to get rid of this mischievous devil." [1] But the "mischievous devil" was far too useful a servant for the Duke to dispense with, his powers of vision and of hearing being preternaturally acute; and the only result of the prince's interference was to embitter Salvatico still further against the princess.

Meanwhile, that young lady had been endeavouring to instill a little animation into the dull Modenese Court. She began to hold receptions; she installed a biribi table in her apartments; she entertained some of the leading

[1] *Correspondance complète de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans*, July 30, 1720.

ladies of the town to supper; and she made friends with her three sisters-in-law, timid girls, whom their austere father had relegated to an almost cloistral existence, and took them alternately for drives into the country in a phaeton, which she drove herself.

This pleased the public, but it did not please the spiteful Salvatico, who persuaded the Duke that his daughter-in-law ought not to be out so late, "on account of the dew," although Colibeaux tells us that she never returned to the palace later than five o'clock. He also complained that she drove much too fast, and would wear out her horses, which would have to be replaced at considerable expense; that she kept the young princesses up too late at night, which was detrimental to their health, if not to their morals; and he endeavoured to deprive her of their society, by suggesting that they should be placed in a convent. The gloomy old bigot, who had not the smallest sympathy with the exuberant spirits of youth, listened with frowning brow, and did not fail to intimate his displeasure to his daughter-in-law. The ducal reprimand, however, had little effect, and the princess continued her country-excursions and her card-parties until, about the middle of August, she became unwell, and the doctors assured her that she was enceinte.

Although, as we shall presently see, this was altogether impossible, the princess did not express any incredulity; but kept to her apartments, and followed the regimen prescribed for her. Soon, however, the doctors were compelled to admit that their diagnosis was incorrect, and that what they had taken for the symptoms of pregnancy were those of smallpox.

For some time the princess was very ill; indeed, for two or three days she was considered to be in such grave danger that the Sacraments were administered; and she called Colibeaux to her bedside, and, handing him a casket, directed him to burn all the papers which it contained, without saying anything about it. It is not improbable that among these papers were the love-letters which she had received from the fascinating Richelieu.

Eventually, she recovered, and found, to her inexpressible relief, that the fell disease had respected her face, and that she was scarcely marked at all. Her first thought was to write to her father, whom, in view of the unpleasant situation of affairs at Modena, she was now most anxious to conciliate, to inform him of her return to health, and to assure him that "death itself would not have been capable of preventing her from loving him with all her heart." The Regent, though he probably entertained some doubts as to the sincerity of these assurances, replied in a very affectionate letter, and ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung at Notre-Dame for his daughter's recovery. Salvatico, on his side, testified his joy by reducing the salaries of the princess's Household all round, notwithstanding that the emoluments of even quite important officials at the Court of Modena were already so low that they would have been rejected with contempt by the lackeys at Versailles or the Palais-Royal.[1]

[1] "The retrenchment is most shameful," writes Colibeaux, "for the majority of the marquises and counts who fill the ante-chambers of this Court have only an old louis d'or of Parma a month for salary and everything." Letter of September 22, 1720, published by Barthélemy.

To beguile the tedium of her convalescence, the princess formed a close friendship with a young and pretty woman of the Court, the Marchesa Levisani. But soon the duke, instigated doubtless by Salvatico, determined to put an end to this intimacy, which was apparently considered derogatory to the dignity of his daughter-in-law, and requested Colibeaux and Madame Piché to employ their influence with her Highness to persuade her to renounce it. Both, however, declined to interfere, and Colibeaux wrote indignantly to the Regent that they seemed to desire to deprive the princess of the little amusement that she could find at Modena.

The Prince of Modena, who during his wife's illness and convalescence had not been permitted by the Duke to approach her, and had passed the time at his villa at Sassuolo, returned towards the end of September; but his reappearance upon the scene brought no pleasure to the princess, but very much the contrary. If she had cherished any hope that her first impressions of her husband had been too hastily formed, and that he would improve upon a nearer acquaintance, it had very speedily been dissipated. Not only was Francesco d'Este plain, awkward and shy, but dull, stupid, morose, and close-fisted. Moreover—and this was a matter which threatened to destroy the peace of the new *ménage* —whether it was that his wife took too little trouble to conceal her indifference for such a partner, or that the possession of this French princess, with her beauty, her pride, her vivacity, and her *savoir-faire*, was too imposing for him, the marriage had not yet been consummated.

The letters of the Abbé Colibeaux, preserved in the

Archives des Affaires Êtrangères, initiate us into the secrets of this princely household. For the auricular confession and the jurisdiction which the priests of those days arrogated to themselves in matrimonial questions permitted the ecclesiastics to express themselves with much greater frankness than the doctors, who confined themselves to material facts, without troubling about moral considerations; and the abbé, charged by the Regent to keep him informed of the most intimate details of his daughter's life, acquitted himself of his mission with a fidelity so scrupulous as to render a considerable part of his despatches quite unsuitable for publication, save in the most unblushing of *chroniques scandaleuses*. Here, however, are some passages which may with safety be transcribed:

"October 3, 1720.—I believe that the prince has some share in the chapter of the Canon Law which speaks *de frigidis et maleficiatis*."

"November 7, 1720.—Everything would go on marvellously well if it were not for the prince's weakness of temperament, to say nothing more; for the princess says that he is incapable. He gives assurances to the contrary. Madame Piché and I have given the Princess of Modena on this matter the most suitable advice. She assured me again yesterday that she has followed it, but that it has only served to confirm this truth more and more. I have begged her to continue, for the prince is very timid, and she has given me her promise. One must rely on the good faith of the princess, who has always appeared to me very sincere."

"November 21, 1720.—The subject of the quarrel is that the prince loves greatly the princess, and would

like to give her proofs of it; but his ability does not correspond to his good intentions, which is a pity." Colibeaux adds that, after this quarrel, the prince had an interview with his father, at which he, much to his embarrassment, was requested to be present, and that his Highness had been sent by the Duke to Bologna, with an intimation that he was not to return until he had succeeded in overcoming his timidity."

"November 28, 1721.—All Modena knows it (i.e. that the marriage is not yet consummated), and thus all Italy will know it soon. People say that the princess is to blame. I have made her understand how essential it is that she should exculpate herself in the eyes of the public, and behave in good faith in this particular; that the laws of marriage which are made for sovereign, as well as for private, persons oblige . . . and that, as regards myself, I cannot permit her to approach the Sacraments, unless I am assured that she will do her duty, and without trickery."

"December 19, 1721.—I have reason to believe that the princess does her duty in this particular; she has promised me, and she assures me of it."

The Regent, disquieted by these reports, instructed Chavigny, the French Minister at Genoa, to proceed to Modena, to study the question on the spot and verify the facts. Chavigny passed a month at the Court, interviewed all the parties concerned, and confirmed the opinion of the confessor that the blame did not lie with the princess, "who had not testified a repugnance for her husband which could be made the subject of any reproach."[1] He appears to have been by no means

[1] Chavigny to the Regent, January 14, 1721, cited by Lemontey.

favourably impressed with the latter, whom he describes as "of very limited intelligence and not wanting in dissimulation and cunning."

During his stay, the princess pressed him to endeavour to destroy the credit of Salvatico, but this he prudently declined to attempt, preferring "to leave this work to the natural inconstancy of the Duke," who was in the habit of changing his favourites as frequently as the Regent did his mistresses. However, there were as yet no signs of Salvatico's favour diminishing, and, thanks to the persistent malignity with which he pursued her, and the irritation of the Duke at the prospect of the failure of his hopes, the princess's situation was an extremely unpleasant one. The Duke did not share the opinion of Colibeaux and Chavigny, and had insisted on his daughter-in-law sacrificing the Marchesa Levisani, who, he believed, was exercising a pernicious influence over her, and acting as intermediary between her and her friends in France, and that lady had been banished from the Court; while he talked of placing his daughters in a convent, in order to deprive her of the consolation of their society.

The prince was also experiencing a far from pleasant time, as his father, who had always detested him, now treated him in a most unpaternal manner. He was also exceedingly mortified to learn that the situation in this singular *ménage* was common talk in Paris, and had an angry scene with his wife on the subject. Very superstitious, he became convinced that a spell had been cast over the marriage, and implored Colibeaux to exorcise the demon, which the abbé declined to do,

explaining gravely that he knew of no prayers applicable to such a case.

Then he decided to make a pilgrimage with his wife to the shrine of Our Lady of Loretto. Colibeaux approved this project, though he confided his opinion to the Regent that, "if this journey had any result, it would be a true miracle." And a few days later he writes: "This journey is regarded as the last resource of the marriage, after which one can have no further hope"; adding that the princess has promised to be very kind indeed to her husband, and that he means to see that she keeps her word.[1]

It is to be feared that the worthy abbé, either out of complaisance for his august penitent, or from regard for his own reputation as a director of consciences, had all along been deliberately closing his eyes to the real facts of the case, since he can hardly have failed to be aware that the princess regarded Italy as a frightful exile, detested her husband, and had only one idea: to get her marriage annulled and to return to her beloved France. The unhappy Prince of Modena was perfectly capable of continuing the succession to the ducal throne, as, indeed, he subsequently proved; but he was painfully shy, and his consort, so far from giving him the smallest encouragement, received his awkward attempts at tenderness with the coldest indifference or ill-concealed disgust.

The prince and princess left Modena, accompanied by a considerable suite, which included Colibeaux, the faithful Madame Piché, the Marchesa Rangoni, Grand Mistress of the Court and a staunch ally of Salvatico, and the Contessa Bosquetti, the princess's favourite of the

[1] Letters of March 15 and 23, 1721, cited by Lemontey.

moment. The most direct route to Loretto was by way of Bologna, but, by the Duke's orders, they made a *détour* to avoid that town, the reason being that the Marchesa Levisani had retired thither after her disgrace; and the amiable old gentleman did not wish to give his daughter-in-law the satisfaction of seeing again her former favourite.

The Prince of Modena had come to Loretto from the most conscientious motives; but the princess had consented to make the pilgrimage for a very different reason, seeing in it the means of realizing her cherished project of returning to France. Hardly had she reached Loretto, than she proposed to her husband that they should fly to Paris, and implore the protection of her father against the persecution to which they were both being subjected by the Duke of Modena. The feeble prince, disappointed perhaps at not receiving any immediate answer to his prayers, does not appear to have opposed the least resistance to this astonishing proposition; and on April 1 —significant date!—they started for Ancona, whence they intended to gain Verona and make their way through Germany into France.

The unfortunate Colibeaux had employed every imaginable argument to persuade the princess to renounce her resolution, but the only concession he was able to obtain was a promise to consult Chavigny before proceeding beyond Ancona. From that town, where they arrived on the 2nd, her Highness addressed a long epistle to Chavigny, who had just returned to Modena with fresh instructions from the Regent, in which she enclosed letters from herself and her husband to the Duke, demanding his permission to

make the journey to France, which appears a little superfluous, since they had already taken French leave, and begging him to persuade the old autocrat " to listen to reason," and " not to oblige them to perform a comedy before the universe."[1]

The princess also despatched the following letter for Chavigny to forward to her father:

" I do not write to you except in trepidation, fearing that the first step that we have been obliged to take may be displeasing to you. . . . The Prince of Modena and myself have been unable to find any other means of remedying the present situation, save by entreating you to permit us to come and render an account of it to you, being fully resolved, as soon as you are fully acquainted with the condition in which we find ourselves, to obey you blindly.

" . . . We have been obliged to make use of the pretext of a journey to Loretto to extricate ourselves from the situation. . . . Chavigny hastened as soon as we informed him, but we could not do more for him than await at Verona the return of his courier, bearer of our prayers.

" Permit me, in my private capacity, to recall to your mind the kindness with which you have always flattered me, and the respectful and tender affection which I have always entertained for you. . . . The misfortune which would touch me the most would be to see that you have already forgotten the promise that you made me when

[1] Colibeaux also wrote to Chavigny to assure him of his entire innocence of any complicity in this escapade: " They have kept the secret so carefully from me," he writes, " that I have left all my clothes at Modena, with the exception of a miserable portmanteau . . . I am in despair."

we parted that you would be pleased to see me again and to love me always, and to know that I should be precipitated into innumerable misfortunes by you, for whom I have an affection which I cannot find sufficiently strong terms to express."

Chavigny despatched a courier in all haste to Paris and persuaded the fugitives to await the answer of the Regent. That prince was terribly alarmed by the news, for the Princess of Modena could not possibly have chosen a more inopportune moment for her escapade. Philippe d'Orléans was just then negotiating the marriages of two of his other daughters, Mlle. de Montpensier and Mlle. de Beaujolais, with the Infant Don Luis, heir to the crown of Spain and that prince's half-brother, Don Carlos, and he feared with reason the effect of such a scandal upon the austere Court of the Escurial. He wrote immediately to the princess, pointing out to her the danger of embroiling Francesco d'Este with his father, and entreating her " to suspend her journey until he should be more amply informed " ; and, at the same time, addressed a letter to his son-in-law, blaming him severely for having undertaken this journey without consulting him, and forbidding him to proceed any farther. Then he sent for the Abbé Philibert, a shrewd and resourceful ecclesiastic, who enjoyed the friendship of his daughter and might be expected to have some influence with her, and despatched him to intercept the fugitive couple and endeavour to persuade them to return to Modena. He was accompanied by a M. Masselot, a relative of a favourite waiting-woman of the Princess of Modena who had followed her to Italy, with instructions to travel together as far as Augsburg, and there to

separate and take each one of the two roads by which the princess and her husband might come from Italy.

Meanwhile, the fugitive couple had reached Verona, whence the princess, without waiting for the paternal reply, wrote again to the Regent, informing him that the Duke of Modena had returned her letter unopened and had given orders to arrest the couriers who might bring any others, and declaring that she and her husband were firmly resolved not to return, since there was every appearance that to do so would mean unhappiness for the rest of their natural lives. On April 21 came the Regent's answer to her letter of the 2nd, to which she replied, the same day, in the following terms :

" I cannot express to you, my dear papa, the grief that I feel on learning, through M. de Chavigny, that you do not accord me the favour that we have demanded of you, upon which our happiness was depending. It cannot be equalled save by the despair in which I am at the thought that the first step which our unhappy situation obliges us to take has displeased you. I would that I could give my life to do something which was agreeable to you, and I am unhappy enough to be able to fear that you may be angered against me. If you could know the reason for our action, I should hope that you would be no longer annoyed with us for having addressed ourselves to you as our only refuge."[1]

The princess and her husband appear to have passed a very pleasant time at Verona, where they lived incognito, although they did not refuse the honours that were offered them. They declared that they were more determined than ever not to return to Modena, although

[1] Letter of April 21, 1721, published by Barthélemy.

the prince was becoming seriously uneasy at the attitude of his father, who was reported to be bitterly incensed against them, and had even suspended the postal service between Modena and Verona, in order to cut off all communication between them and their friends in the capital.

On May 11, the Abbé Philibert arrived at Verona. Not having the same reasons as Colibeaux for allowing himself to be deceived, he quickly penetrated the designs of the princess, and proceeded to represent to her the impossibility of the Regent permitting her to execute them. The lady at first refused to listen to reason, flew into a violent passion, and declared her unalterable resolution to terminate a marriage which appeared to her "like a perpetual prison." But, recognising at length that Philippe d'Orléans, for the present at any rate, was determined not to afford her the least encouragement, she passed from anger to despair, and, snatching up a pen, addressed to him a piteous letter, which concluded thus :

" By all that is most dear to you, I conjure you, my dear papa, not to abandon me in my sad situation. I am the most unhappy creature in the world ; on which ever side I turn I see nothing but grief and despair ; my only resource is in your kindness. . . . I shall not renounce the hope of seeing you again ; you would not wish it yourself, my dear papa. I shall return to Italy, not without grief, but with a reasonable grief."

It proved, however, to be a far easier matter to persuade the princess to return to Modena than to induce the Duke to consent to receive her. The fact is that the indignation which the old prince had expressed at this escapade,

which, by the way, had come as no surprise to him, had been merely assumed, since it promised to facilitate greatly his secret designs. His most ardent desire was to see the succession to his throne assured, and, as there seemed to be little prospect of his eldest son, who, as we have said, he detested, being able to accomplish this, he had determined to institute proceedings to set aside his rights to the crown, in favour of his younger brother, Prince Frederico. Thus, Charlotte d'Orléans, by running away with her unfortunate husband and prejudicing his case in the eyes of the public, had constituted herself the involuntary ally of the Duke.

For some days the Duke, egged on by Salvatico, opposed a stubborn resistance to the demands of Chavigny that he should receive his errant daughter-in-law, and it was only when the Frenchman had threatened him with the resentment of the Regent that he finally yielded. On May 28, the princess arrived at Modena. She came alone, for the prince, not daring to present himself before his father until the latter's indignation should have had time to subside, had remained at Venice, whither he and his wife had proceeded from Verona.

The reception accorded her was mortifying to the last degree. No one came to meet her ; no one received her either in the courts or on the staircase of the palace, and she had to make her way alone to the Duke's cabinet. The old gentleman greeted her with the usual empty compliments, and immediately escorted her to her apartments, whence he sent to summon the three princesses, and, the moment they appeared, took his departure. Salvatico, on his side, lost not a moment in resuming his persecution. He persuaded the Duke to forbid the ladies

of the Court to visit the princess—a prohibition which was presently extended to all the French members of her Household; and he caused the door of communication between her apartments and those of her sisters-in-law to be walled up, which practically precluded all private intercourse between them. In short, the poor lady found herself almost completely isolated.

The Abbé Philibert, who had accompanied the princess to Modena, addressed a strong protest to the Duke, but the latter ignored it, under the pretext that the abbé had no official character. Philibert, much irritated, wrote to the Regent that the sojourn of his daughter at Modena was "no longer possible or supportable," and appealed to Chavigny, who demanded the dismissal of Salvatico, which was, of course, refused. That personage, profiting by the continued absence of the Prince of Modena, who, being still afraid to face his father, had accepted an invitation to visit the Elector of Bavaria at Munich, was evidently determined to render the princess's position intolerable, in order to drive her to create a new scandal; and Chavigny and Philibert were in despair. The former wrote indignant despatches to Paris, representing the Duke of Modena as a cruel tyrant, whose persecutions had driven his family and his subjects to such an extremity of despair that they excited the compassion of all honest men; while the latter wrote to the prince entreating him to return. This the latter at length consented to do, and, thanks doubtless to his discretion in selecting July 2, which happened to be his birthday, for his appearance upon the scene, was received "with moderation and few words." He found himself treated, however, with almost as much severity as his wife, and none of the courtiers was

permitted to pay his respects to him, unless accompanied by Salvatico.

The ridiculous and humiliating situation of the princess continued for several weeks, notwithstanding the protests of Philibert and Chavigny. "Monseigneur [the Regent] did not reckon when he gave his daughter in marriage that she would be rendered unhappy," said Philibert to the duke one day. "There is nothing that I do not do in order to please her, and I do not believe that I fail in anything," was the reply. It was clearly impossible to argue with such a person.

At length, towards the end of July, the young couple received permission to pay a visit to the baths of Lucca. The princess immediately began making preparations which indicated clearly that she hoped never to return. Colibeaux lost no time in warning the Regent, and demanded that the prince should write severely to his daughter on the subject. The same courier carried a letter from the princess to her father, declaring that it was impossible for her to endure any longer the tyranny of the Duke of Modena, "without drawing upon herself the contempt of all Italy," and entreating him to give her and her husband an asylum in some town in France, as far removed from Paris as he might please. To this the Regent naturally refused to consent; nevertheless, the princess prolonged her stay at Lucca, in the hope that he might relent.

Her hopes, however, were vain, for not only did the Regent absolutely refuse to sanction his daughter's return to France, but he subsequently caused her to be informed that, until she had abandoned any such intention, he should not attempt to interfere

between her and her father-in-law in order to procure a relaxation of the severity with which she was treated.

This news reached the princess at Rome, whither she and her husband had come to spend a month incognito. She was at first greatly distressed, but soon, recognising that her father was really in earnest, she became more resigned ; and Philippe d'Orléans, on being acquainted with this, addressed a strong letter to the Duke of Modena, in which he declared he should regard the treatment which the prince and princess received from him as a personal matter.

Towards the end of December, the young people returned to Modena, and shortly afterwards took up their residence at a country-house belonging to the prince near Reggio, where it had been decided that they should henceforth pass the greater part of their time. This arrangement had been made at the instance of the Regent, who perceived in it a means of securing reasonable liberty to his daughter and avoiding the inevitable friction with the Duke which her presence at Modena would entail. Singularly enough, however, neither the prince nor the princess seem to have been at all enamoured of the prospect ; and the intervention of the Cardinal de Rohan, the French Ambassador at the Vatican, was required to induce them to consent. Presumably, they were of opinion that, with all its inconveniences, residence at the Court of Modena was preferable to the ennui of existence in the country.

At the beginning of the following autumn, a rumour was current in Paris that the Duc de Richelieu had contracted a secret marriage with Mlle. de Charolais. The princess did not fail to be informed of this report,

which caused the poor lady, in whose breast the passion which the duke had inspired was far from extinguished, unspeakable distress. "The 17th," writes Madame Piché to the Regent, "the Abbé Colibeaux announced to her the marriage of the Duc de Richelieu with Mlle. de C. [Charolais]. This was for her a veritable thunderbolt, and caused her to weep all day. The husband and all the family knew not what to make of it. A week later, the Marselot [Madame Marselot] received a letter from her sister, who informed her of the marriage of the said duke. She had the imprudence to speak of it. This is for her an additional grief, but she did not dare to weep, which made her very ill."

There was no truth in this report, but it does not appear to have been contradicted for some time, or, at any rate, the denial was very slow in reaching Italy. Consequently, it exercised a great influence upon the princess, who had evidently been maintaining a correspondence with Richelieu, and had cherished the illusion that she was still very near to his heart.[1] Now that she believed that

[1] Soulavie affirms that, some months after the princess's marriage, Richelieu followed his expatriated inamorata to Modena, disguised as a hawker of books, and that, in this character, he succeeded on several occasions in gaining access to her apartments in the palace, when "he hastened to make her forget her sorrow and her misfortunes." He also describes a very piquant interview between the duke and the lady's husband, who, returning sooner than was expected from the chase, had nearly surprised the pair at an exceedingly inopportune moment, but without conceiving any suspicion.

The only evidence in support of this story, which has found its way into the works of several modern writers with a weakness for the picturesque, is a somewhat obscure passage in a letter of Colibeaux, dated December 26, 1720—that is to say, just about the time the chronicler places the adventure in question:

"The sieur Rafi [Rafé] has arrived here, with a gardener. We might very well have dispensed with both of them." Now, the sieur Rafé was Richelieu's confidential *valet de chambre*, and it may be argued that wherever he happened to be, his master was not likely to be far

he had abandoned her definitely for her rival, the principal motive which had urged her to return to France was removed, and she became more reconciled to her lot. It would appear, also, that she had begun to fear that, if she continued to keep her husband at a distance, the affair might terminate "*à l'italienne*"; and these apprehensions were artfully stimulated by Colibeaux, although he was aware that they were perfectly groundless, in the hope that they might lead to the solution so much desired. He was not disappointed. In the spring of 1723, the princess was announced to be enceinte; and on November 18 she gave birth to a son, who, writes Colibeaux, "appeared to me to be beautiful and healthy."

off; indeed, he may have been "the gardener." But, though it is quite possible that Richelieu did undertake a journey to Modena, since amorous adventures in which difficulties had to be overcome always made a peculiar appeal to him, it is, when we pause to consider the rigorous surveillance to which the princess was subjected by her father-in-law and Salvatico, highly improbable that he succeeded in obtaining the lengthy private audiences which Soulavie describes.

CHAPTER XIII

Mlle. d'Orléans as Abbess of Chelles—Improvements which she executes at the convent—She constitutes herself the official protectress of the Jansenists—Efforts of the Regent to induce her to renounce her heterodox views—He exiles Père Ledoux, almoner of Chelles—The abbess retaliates by driving away Madame de Fretteville, who has been won over by the Jesuits—Extraordinary conduct of the princess, who transforms her abbey from a monastic retreat into a kind of country-house and leads with her nuns a life of pleasure—Calumnies—Sudden reformation of the abbess, who passes from dissipation to austerity—She leaves Chelles, and, though still retaining her title of abbess, becomes temporary superior of the Abbey of the Val-de-Grâce—Brief return to worldliness, followed by increased austerity—She seeks to convert the Regent, and reprimands him severely for the scandalous manner in which he distributes the ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown.

WE left Louise Adélaïde d'Orléans duly installed as Abbess of Chelles, in the room of poor Madame de Villars, whom she had succeeded in ousting from the office which she had held for more than ten years. The young lady appears at first to have taken her rôle of superior of a religious establishment very seriously, and she proceeded to reconstruct almost entirely the buildings of the convent and to restore the church; while she rendered a still more valuable service to the community by assuring its water-supply, the inadequacy of which had been the chief disadvantage of this otherwise delightful spot, owing to the fact that the spring which supplied the town of Chelles was situated on much lower ground than

the abbey. We read in the *Journal de la Régence* of Buvat :

" The 22 May, Père Sebastien,[1] Carmelite monk of the convent of the Place Maubert, native of Lyons, repaired to the town of Chelles, and, as this monk has a superior genius for the sciences, and particularly for those which depend upon mathematics, having examined the ground about the town and the situation of the abbey, he determined to have a machine constructed, by means of which this abbey will have the necessary supply of water, with a reservoir in the interior of the convent containing more than two hundred hogsheads, for its daily necessities and in the event of fire. This will henceforth exempt the abbey from keeping a waggon with a man and a horse, as it did formerly for more than eleven hundred years, to bring it the water which it required."

Buvat adds that Mlle. d'Orléans had caused the following inscription to be engraved on a slab of black marble placed above the fountain of Chelles, " to serve as a perpetual monument to the glory of this illustrious princess " :

> " Quae per prata humilis Bathildis[2] lympha fluebat
> Huic dedit Adelais unda superba fluat."

And that, not satisfied with this, the abbess had put up a bronze plaque, thus inscribed :

[1] Jean Truchet, called Père Sebastien, born in 1657, died in 1719. He was celebrated throughout France for his knowledge of mechanics and hydraulics. His best known invention was a contrivance called " *le diable*," whereby the largest trees were able to be transplanted without injuring them.

[2] Sainte-Bathilde was, as we have mentioned, the real founder of the Abbey of Chelles.

"Fontem exaltari jussit
Et hunc lapidem posuit
Ludovica Adelais
Abbatissa
Anno ætatis suae
XXI
Mense novembri anni 1719
Imperanti
Ludovico XV
Regenti
Philippo Aurelianensi duce
Adelaidis patre."

The improvement of her convent was not the only direction in which the princess found scope for her activity. It will be remembered that Madame de Villars had been a rigid Molinist, while her youthful successor had embraced the doctrines of Jansenius, which were held by Père Ledoux, the almoner of the convent, and the great majority of the nuns who had supported her against the late abbess; and scarcely had she returned to Chelles, than she plunged into the controversy which divided the Gallican Church with the ardour which she brought to everything which she undertook, and showed her intention of constituting herself the official protectress of the Jansenists. In April 1720, supported by the Cardinal de Noailles, she successfully intervened on behalf of certain Benedictine monks who, having appealed against the Constitution Unigenitus, had been banished by their General to distant monasteries; and a few months later she obtained authorisation from her father for this Order to elect as its head the Père Saint-Marthe, a particularly zealous opponent of the "Constitution."

The Regent, though he had yielded to his daughter's

Louise Adélaïde d'Orléans, Abbess of Chelles

From an engraving after the painting by Malherbe

importunities, was seriously disquieted by the attitude which she had adopted, fearing that it might lead to differences with the Vatican, very undesirable at this juncture. He therefore despatched to Chelles Père Trévoux, who had once been her *directeur*, to reason with her and strive to bring her back to the path of orthodoxy. The abbess, however, refused to listen to the reverend Father, and forbade him even to present himself before her. The Regent, much irritated, replied by banishing Père Ledoux, to whose influence this refusal was generally ascribed, and charged the Jesuits to undertake the conversion of the princess, by any means that might commend itself to them. The Jesuits succeeded in winning over the prioress, Madame de Fretteville, who, it will be remembered, had contributed powerfully to develop the taste of Mlle. d'Orléans for the religious life and to persuade her to take the veil. This lady now enjoyed the princess's entire confidence, and took advantage of it to represent to her the error of her ways and to pursue her with incessant remonstrances. The abbess, however, was one of those whose determination is only strengthened by opposition, and, ignoring the arguments and entreaties of Madame de Fretteville, she tormented her father with demands for the recall of Père Ledoux. But the Regent, although, since the death of the Duchesse de Berry, he had shown much affection for Mlle. d'Orléans, remained inflexible; upon which she revenged herself by making matters so unpleasant for her former favourite that she was obliged to leave the convent.

After this, the abbess seems to have decided that she had gone far enough in defiance of her father, and, while

declining to abandon her heterodox views, she, in other ways, neglected nothing in order to please him and to attract him to Chelles, which he soon fell into the habit of visiting at least once a week. With this object, she proceeded to give full scope to that taste for worldly pursuits which she had carried with her into the cloister, and to transform her abbey from a monastic retreat into a kind of country-house. The narrow, gloomy cells of the nuns gave place to light and airy rooms ; the parlours were converted into veritable boudoirs ; the gardens lost the somewhat severe aspect which they had maintained for centuries, and beds of gorgeous flowers, sanded paths, and delightful arbours appeared everywhere ; the latest books, pamphlets, and gazettes were ordered from Paris ; fine horses and elegant equipages occupied the stables, and the abbess, accompanied by some of the more favoured nuns, might frequently be seen riding and driving about the neighbourhood ; skilled pyrotechnists were installed in the convent to prepare the fireworks which constituted one of the principal amusements of the reverend Mother ; the religious ceremonies assumed the character of musical fêtes ; and dramatic representations were organised—not the religious tragedies which had been performed before Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon at Saint-Cyr, but the most passionate of Racine's plays, in which the youngest and prettiest of the nuns and novices took part.

The activities of the abbess herself were as manifold as those of her father. She worked at embroideries and tapestries ; she made wigs for the plays performed at Chelles with her own hands ; she practised pistol-shooting ; she played and sang ; she studied chemistry,

physics, and even surgery, and is said to have attained some skill in the use of surgical instruments.

The Regent came frequently to Chelles; and in his wake followed a constant stream of visitors from the gay world, eager to assist at the singular spectacle of pious recluses declaiming the most amorous sentiments; to enjoy the delightful msiuc, and to partake of the sumptuous repasts which the abbess provided for them; while, on their side, the *chansonniers* hastened to sharpen their pens to describe, or rather to travesty, the life of this singular community.

" De l'abbaye
Où réside Vénus,
Nonne jolie,
Disant peu *d'oremus*,
Loin des soins superflus,
Ne songeant tout au plus
Q'à bien passer la vie,
Fait bons les revenus
De l'abbaye.

" Du monastère
L'amoureux directeur
En l'art de plaire
Vient instruire chaque sœur.
L'amour gagne les cœurs
Par des attraits trompeurs.
C'est la règle sévère
Que maintient en vigueur
Le monastère.

. . . . . .

" Pour tout office
On goûte tous les jours
Mille délices,
Q'assaisonne l'Amour.

Chaque instant sur le cœur
Il répand ses faveurs.
A ce dieu si propice
Elles livrent leurs cœurs
Pour tout office." [1]

. . . . . .

In the midst of these worldly distractions, the abbess appears to have preserved the purity of her morals, but it must be admitted that she furnished calumny with arms; and, needless to say, calumny did not fail to turn them to account. She was accused of filling the place in the Regent's affections which had been attributed to the Duchesse de Berry; of practising the vices of ancient Greece; of a gallantry with the Duc de Richelieu, who was said to have entered the convent in disguise, and of a more durable love-affair with her intendant Augeard, who was "amiable and young." [2]

Although there was probably not a grain of truth in any of these reports, the worldly, agitated life which the young lady led was reprehensible enough in all conscience for the superior of a monastic community, and constituted a very grave scandal. Happily, it did not last many months; for it was impossible for this restless, impulsive creature to be content with anything for very long. "Sometimes austere to excess, sometimes with nothing of religion about her save the robe; musician, surgeon, theologian, *directrice*, and all that by leaps and bounds, though accompanied by much intelligence; always fatigued and disgusted by her different situations; incapable of persevering in any of them." Such is the

[1] *Recueil Maurepas*, cited by Barthélemy.
[2] Duclos, *Mémoires secrets*.

portrait which Saint-Simon draws of her ; and soon, by a natural reaction, she abandoned this life of pleasure for one of excessive piety. Perhaps, the remonstrances of her exiled almoner, Père Ledoux, the only person who possessed any real influence over her, contributed to this startling transformation ; possibly, it may have been partly brought about by chagrin at the futility of her efforts to obtain that ascendancy over her father of which she had dreamed. Any way, she passed on a sudden from dissipation to austerity, and turned with a new ardour towards Jansenism. " Her progress in the spiritual life was such that she broke one morning, in an access of devotion, all her musical instruments, and made of them a great fire, which she lighted with her sheets of profane music. She gave no more suppers or collations except to simple nuns, and meditated upon death to such a degree that she decided one evening, at ten o'clock, on rising from table, to go and visit her place in the tomb which she had had excavated for her. Each of the nuns, torch in hand, accompanied her into the church ; they caused the vault to be opened and descended. She tried her bed, and appeared satisfied with her future habitation."[1]

The public, it is to be feared, was more amused than edified by this metamorphosis, with regard to the permanence of which it was not unnaturally somewhat sceptical, and the *chansonniers* did not fail to make merry at the expense of the abbess :

" Que dans vos yeux Jansénius
Trouve de fortes armes !
Que la bulle *Unigenitus*
Tient peu contre vos charmes !

[1] Soulavie, *Mémoires du duc de Richelieu.*

Pour vous plaire, Iris, de bon cœur
Je me ferais janséniste ;
Mais ayez pour moi la douceur
D'une âme moliniste.

" Je vois l'Amour armé de traits
Qui vous suit à la trace ;
De votre air vif, brillant et frais
La grâce est efficace.
Je soutiendrai ce dogme-là,
Et ma thèse est publique,
Quand on devrait chez Loyola
M'appeler hérétique." [1]

" Iris," however, did not persevere the less in her Jansenist zeal, and, exasperated against the chiefs of the Jesuit faction, who had persuaded the Regent to exile Ledoux, she posed as the protectress of all whom they persecuted, and opened to them the gates of Chelles.

But, in the midst of this return to devotion, a great weariness of the career she had chosen came upon her, and a report was current that she intended to petition the Holy See to relieve her of her vows. " The Abbess of Chelles," writes Mathieu Marais, in December 1720, " is bored in her abbey, and is coming to pass some time at the Val-de-Grâce, where she will be nearer the Court and expedients to return there, if that be possible."

There was no truth in the report that Mlle. d'Orléans desired to renounce the religious life, but she was certainly tired of Chelles, where it is not unlikely that she was experiencing considerable difficulty in enforcing discipline, the bonds of which had been so much relaxed that it must have been no easy task to draw them tight again. Any way, to the Val-de-Grâce she came, and, the

[1] M. Victor du Bled, *la Société française du XVIe siècle au XXe siècle, Série 4e.*

office of abbess of that celebrated community being then vacant, obtained authorisation from the Regent to occupy it temporarily, while retaining her title of Abbess of Chelles, the direction of the latter convent being undertaken by one of her favourites there, whom she had been permitted to nominate in her place.

The nuns of the Val-de-Grâce, a community which had always prided themselves on the regularity and decorum which prevailed among them, were very far from gratified by the arrival of a young lady who had already contrived to make herself so notorious; nor were they any the more favourably disposed towards their new superior when they saw her resume some of the eccentricities which had marked the early months of her reign at Chelles, installing herself in an apartment separated completely from the common dormitory, establishing a most sumptuous table, and "very frequently sending very late at night to order pieces of pastry from a neighbouring pastry-cook, who brought them to the abbey at unseasonable hours."[1] These things the good Sisters were compelled to tolerate, but they demanded and obtained of Mlle. d'Orléans, as a special favour, that when her father came to see her, he should do so without any suite and enter the convent absolutely alone.

The Regent, in fact, came often to see his daughter, whose return to worldliness was of very brief duration, and who speedily returned to devotion, admonished him severely on the wickedness of his ways, and endeavoured to persuade him to lead a different life. Becoming more fervidly Jansenist than ever, she plunged

[1] Buvat, *Journal de la Régence*, May 1722.

with renewed ardour into religious controversy, in which she proved herself no mean adversary; and Mathieu Marais cites a letter of hers in response to one from François de Chamilly, Archbishop of Tours, a partisan of the Jesuits, which proves that she wielded a vigorous pen, and was capable of dealing some uncommonly shrewd blows. She was, too, particularly indignant at the scandalous manner in which the Regent disposed of his ecclesiastical patronage, bestowing bishoprics and abbeys without taking the smallest account of the merits of the recipients; and at the distribution of benefices in 1723, in which he showed even more than his usual indifference, and promoted several persons notoriously unfit to hold any sacred office, she addressed to him a remonstrance couched in the strongest possible terms, "which frightened him," says Saint-Simon, "and which, however, he read and reread twice. It was admirable," he continues, "both on the choice of the subject and on the abuse which he made of it, and threatened him with the anger of God, who would chastise him promptly. He was sufficiently moved by it to speak of it, and even to allow it to be seen; but I do not know whether he profited by it. He had not time to do so."

A few days later, in fact, Philippe d'Orléans was stricken with apoplexy, and expired in the arms of his latest favourite, Madame de Phalaris (December 23, 1723).

CHAPTER XIV

Louise Élisabeth d'Orléans, Mlle. de Montpensier, fourth daughter of the Regent—Negotiations concluded for the marriage of Louis XV. to the Infanta, Aña Victoria, and for that of Don Luis, Prince of the Asturias, to Mlle. de Montpensier—Embassy of Saint-Simon to Madrid—Festivities in Paris—Departure of Mlle. de Montpensier for Spain—Character of this princess—Her portrait by *Madame*—Her journey to the frontier—The exchange of the princesses—Meeting with Philip V. and Don Luis at Cogollos—The marriage: an ignorant cardinal—Saint-Simon obtains the public "consummation" of the marriage—Letter of the Princess of the Asturias to her father—Philip V. and Elizabeth Farnese—Influence of the Queen over her husband—Their daily life—Severity of Philip V. towards transgressors of the moral law—Illness of the princess—Anxieties of the King and Queen—Extraordinary behaviour of the princess—She obstinately refuses to attend the State ball to be given in her honour—Saint-Simon's interview with her—The ball is abandoned—Conclusion of Saint-Simon's embassy—Incredible vulgarity of the princess at his farewell audience—Improvement in her conduct—Affection of Don Luis for her—Abdication of Philip V.

WHILE the three elder daughters of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans were making so much stir in the world, their three younger sisters, Mlles. de Montpensier, de Beaujolais, and de Chartres, born respectively in 1709, 1714, and 1716, were still in the schoolroom or the nursery. However, in the winter of 1721–22, the first of these young ladies, notwithstanding that she had scarcely attained her twelfth year, found herself promoted to a most exalted position.

After the fall of Alberoni (November 1719) and the enforced adhesion of Philip V. to the Quadruple Alliance (May 1720), the disposition of the Regent and Dubois towards Spain underwent a change, and they determined

to endeavour to convert the *rapprochement* to which they had constrained her into an intimate alliance, and to renew by marriages the almost broken relations between the two great branches of the House of Bourbon.

Meanwhile Philip V. had turned his eyes towards the Court of Vienna, and in May 1720 he made overtures to the Emperor, with the view of marrying Don Luis, Prince of the Asturias, to the eldest archduchess, who would inherit her father's Flemish and Italian dominions, and his second son, the Infant Don Fernando, to the second archduchess, heiress of the German and Austrian States. These propositions, however, were but coldly received by Charles VI., and the negotiations dragged slowly on for nearly a year, when the indifference shown by the Emperor began to cause his Catholic Majesty serious umbrage. It was then that Dubois, who had not failed to keep himself informed of these manœuvres, decided to profit by Philip's dissatisfaction to detach him altogether from Austria, by offering him at Versailles the double marriage which he was seeking at Vienna, that is to say, a marriage between Louis XV. and the King of Spain's only daughter, the Infanta Aña Victoria, and another between the Prince of the Asturias and the Regent's eldest unmarried daughter, Mlle. de Montpensier. These alliances were much to be desired by the House of Orléans. In the first place, the tender age of the Infanta—she was only three years old—meant that years must elapse before the birth of a prince in the direct line of succession. In the second, since Don Luis was reported to resemble his father "as closely as one drop of water resembles another," he would probably, like Philip V., allow himself to be governed by his wife;

and the Duc d'Orléans might therefore reckon that, in the event of the death of Louis XV., his daughter would be able to prevent her husband from disputing the title of the Regent or the Duc de Chartres to the throne, or from aiding his younger brothers to do so.

The Marquis de Maulevrier, the French Ambassador at Madrid, was accordingly instructed to sound the Spanish Court on the matter, and, at the same time, to inform the King that the French Government was aware of his negotiations with Vienna. Philip V. did not hesitate to admit them, saying that he had believed that they might conduce to the advantage of his family. He added that he did not refuse the propositions which had been made to him ; that he was much touched by them, and that in a little while he would show the attachment that he bore the land of his birth.

His Majesty was, indeed, highly pleased at the prospect of giving an infanta to Louis XV. ; while the Queen, Elizabeth Farnese, the "Termagant of Spain,"[1] was equally gratified at the idea of seeing the crown matrimonial of France upon her daughter's head. As for the proposal that the Prince of the Asturias should marry Mlle. de Montpensier, this, as binding the two countries still closer together and assuring to the King and Queen the goodwill of the Duc d'Orléans, was scarcely less welcome.

Early in July, Père Daubenton, Philip V.'s confessor, who had warmly supported Dubois in this matter, informed Maulevrier that since the end of March negotiations with the Emperor had entirely ceased, and that his Catholic Majesty was more and more resolved to live on terms of close friendship with the Duc d'Orléans.

[1] Carlyle, *Frederick the Great.*

This intelligence was presently confirmed by the King himself, and, finally, on the 26th, the Prime Minister, Grimaldo, visited the French Ambassador to demand, in his master's name, the hand of Mlle. de Montpensier for the Prince of the Asturias, and to propose the marriage of the Infanta with Louis XV.

The same day, Maulevrier sent off a courier to Paris, with despatches which were naturally received with the liveliest satisfaction by the Regent and Dubois, but with much less pleasure by the eleven-year-old King, who wept at the idea of taking to wife a child of three. However, his preceptor, Fleury, the future cardinal, eventually succeeded in obtaining from him a reluctant consent.

The preliminaries were soon concluded. It was decided that the Infanta should be sent to France, to be brought up there until she should reach a marriageable age; the marriage of the Prince of the Asturias and Mlle. de Montpensier was, however, to take place as soon as the latter arrived in Spain. Louis XV. promised Mlle. de Montpensier a dowry of 500,000 écus; the Regent one of 40,000, partly in specie and partly in jewels; and Philip V. was to provide his daughter-in-law with jewels to the value of 50,000 écus. The announcement of the latter alliance, Saint-Simon tells us, produced the utmost consternation among the cabal opposed to the Regent, which had always sought on the other side of the Pyrenees for the means of compassing his overthrow, and had fondly imagined the enmity between him and Philip V. to be altogether irreconcilable. "Men, women, people of all conditions, who belonged to that cabal lost all countenance. It was a pleasure to me, I admit it, to look upon. They were utterly disconcerted."

On October 23, Saint-Simon, in the character of Ambassador Extraordinary, set out for Madrid, to make the formal demand for the hand of the Infanta. The duke had been invested by the Regent with this mission at his own request, greatly to the annoyance of Dubois, who hated him, and who, Saint-Simon assures us, did his best to ruin him, by insisting that he should be accompanied by a suite out of all proportion to that which the occasion demanded and dressed with unparalleled magnificence.

A week later, the Duque de Ossuna arrived from Madrid on a similar mission, and signalised his arrival by giving a succession of splendid fêtes and displays of fireworks, which appear to have greatly delighted the Parisians. On November 13, he formally demanded of the King the hand of Mlle. de Montpensier, and on the 15th the marriage-contract was signed at the Tuileries, with great ceremony, after which Louis XV. proceeded to the Palais-Royal to compliment his cousin. On the 16th, there was a ball at the Opera and a grand fête at the Palais-Royal, "which was illuminated outside as well as in, and at which there was a superb collation of fruits and sweetmeats, and so great a profusion of liquors that in the morning they threw what remained out of the window in buckets. The cost amounted to 840,000 livres."[1] On the morrow, Mlle. de Montpensier received the Maréchal de Villeroi, Louis XV.'s *gouverneur*, who came to bid her adieu in the name of his Majesty, the Ambassadors, and the Provost of the Merchants and the sheriffs, who presented her, on behalf of the town, with six baskets covered with white taffeta, containing

[1] Buvat.

tapers, candles, and dried fruits. The baskets were carried by six archers, who received from the princess twenty louis for their trouble. A like present was offered to the Duque de Ossuna, who gave the archers twelve louis.

These ceremonies concluded, Mlle. de Montpensier entered her carriage, with her father and brother, her *gouvernante* the Comtesse de Cheverny, the Duchesse de Ventadour, and the Princesse de Soubise, who had been appointed *gouvernante* to the Infanta, and set out for Spain. She was followed by a most imposing suite, which was to serve the double purpose of accompanying her to the Spanish frontier and the Infanta from Bayonne to Paris. The escort consisted of one hundred and fifty gendarmes, whom the Prince de Rohan-Soubise, selected to receive the Infanta, had equipped superbly at his own expense, and a detachment of eight Gardes du Corps. The Regent and the Duc de Chartres left her at Bourg-la-Reine and returned to Paris, and the princess continued her journey to Arpajon, where she was to pass the night, and where some impudent thieves profited by the carelessness of the escort to carry off several trunks from the waggons and nearly a dozen pieces of silver plate.

Louise Élisabeth d'Orléans, Mlle. de Montpensier, the young princess who thus suddenly found herself thrust into such prominence, was born on December 11, 1709, and had therefore not yet completed her twelfth year. Much as her elder sisters had suffered from the deplorable indifference of their parents during their early years, she had suffered still more; indeed, her education was utterly neglected. Before she was seven years old, she was withdrawn from the Benedictine convent of Saint-Paul, near Beauvais, where she might at least have

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Louise Élisabeth d'Orléans (Mlle. de Montpensier),
Princess of the Asturias, afterwards Queen of Spain

From the painting by Juan Rank, in the Museum of the Prado

learned something, and thenceforth appears to have received scarcely any instruction at all, scholastic, moral, or religious; not even ordinary good manners; and, since she lacked the intelligence which might have counterbalanced to some degree the effects of this criminal neglect, she had developed into one of the most ignorant, disagreeable, and worst-behaved little girls possible to conceive. Here is the portrait which her grandmother has left us of her:

"I cannot say that Mlle. de Montpensier is ugly; she has fine eyes, a delicate white skin, a well-formed nose, although a trifle thin, and a very small mouth. With all that, she is the most disagreeable person that I have ever seen in my life. In all her actions, whether she is speaking, eating, or drinking, she is insupportable. She did not shed a tear on leaving us, and hardly bade us farewell."

Such was the princess whom the chances of politics were about to throw into the midst of the most austere and punctilious Court in Europe.

It had been arranged that Mlle. de Montpensier's journey should occupy a month, such being the time which it was calculated the Infanta would require to reach the frontier. But the Spaniards travelled in such leisurely fashion that the time allotted the French *cortège* had to be considerably extended, and the princess was able to spend three days at both Poitiers and Bordeaux, at which latter city she met with a magnificent reception. At Bayonne, she visited Maria Anna of Neuburg, the widow of Charles II. of Spain, who received her with great kindness, made her sit in an arm-chair similar to her own, and gave her several costly presents: a very valuable

diamond, a watch, a snuff-box encrusted with diamonds, and a commode filled with Chinese porcelain. Finally, on January 9, 1722, she reached the northern bank of the Bidassoa, facing the Île des Faisans, at the same time as the Infanta, who was in charge of the Marqués de Santa-Cruz, major-domo of the Queen's Household, and her *camerara mayor*, the Duquessa de Montellano, appeared on the farther shore.

At midday on the morrow, the exchange of princesses was carried out with great ceremony.

In the middle of the Île des Faisans, the northern portion of which was French territory, and the southern Spanish, a wooden pavilion, handsomely furnished, had been erected, consisting of two apartments, one on the side of France, the other on that of Spain, separated by a salon, in which the exchange was to take place. A bridge of boats connected the two banks with the island. The river was covered with boats, gay with flags and crowded with people.

The Prince de Rohan gave his hand to Mlle. de Montpensier as she alighted from her carriage, and conducted her to her apartment. At the same moment, the little Infanta, escorted by the Marqués de Santa-Cruz, entered hers. After the princesses had rested awhile, they entered the salon, and took their places on opposite sides of a table placed in the middle of the room. The Prince de Rohan was on Mlle. de Montpensier's right ; the Duchesse de Ventadour and the Princesse de Soubise on her left. The Marqués de Santa-Cruz and the Duquesa de Montellano occupied similar positions next the Infanta.

The various documents connected with the exchange having been examined and approved on the previous

evening, it was not judged necessary to read them in their entirety. They were therefore merely summarized, and then presented and signed. The Prince de Rohan made a complimentary speech, thanking the Spaniards, in the name of Louis XV., for the care which they had taken of the precious person of the Infanta; to which the Marqués de Santa-Cruz replied. The princesses embraced and were reconducted to their apartments, and, after presents had been distributed, they left the island and resumed their respective journeys, Mlle. de Montpensier being now accompanied only by Spaniards, with the exception of her *gouvernante* Madame de Cheverny, who, however, was to leave her at Lerma, where their Catholic Majesties and her *fiancé* were awaiting her.

The Infanta had occupied thirty-five days to traverse the distance between Lerma and the Bidassoa, but, in obedience to the repeated orders of Philip V., who was impatient to behold his future daughter-in-law, the Marqués de Santa-Cruz used such expedition that it was now accomplished in ten; and on January 19 the French princess arrived at Cogollos, four leagues from Lerma.

The King immediately sent the Duque del Arco, his grand equerry, to compliment the princess in his name. He himself and the Prince of the Asturias followed in the duke's suite, in an ordinary carriage. On reaching Cogollos, Del Arco, having warned Mlle. de Montpensier's attendants not to betray the incognito of the illustrious travellers, addressed to the young lady a long harangue, in order to enable the King and the prince to study her at their leisure. Then he demanded permission to present to her Highness two gentlemen of his suite, who were

extremely anxious to pay their respects to her; and Philip V. and his son stepped forward to salute her, when one of the princess's ladies "spoiled the mystery," by uttering an exclamation of astonishment. Mademoiselle de Montpensier thereupon "threw herself upon the hands of the newcomers to kiss them, and was immediately embraced by them." The King and Don Luis then entered the princess's carriage, and the *cortège* set out for Lerma, where, after the princess had been presented to Elizabeth Farnese, the marriage was celebrated.

It was productive of an incident which proved too much for even the gravity of the solemn Spanish Court. The Cardinal Borgia, whose duty it was to pronounce the nuptial benediction, happened to be quite ignorant of the ceremonial, and was, in consequence, terribly alarmed when informed that the marriage was to take place forthwith. Saint-Simon, who entered the chapel some little time before the arrival of the Court, found his Eminence near the altar, diligently studying his lesson between two of his chaplains, who held the book open in front of him. "The worthy prelate," he writes, "did not know how to read; he tried, however, and read aloud, but incorrectly. The chaplains corrected him; he scolded them; recommenced; was again corrected; again grew angry, and to such a degree that he turned round upon them and shook them by their surplices. I laughed as much as I pleased; for he perceived nothing, so occupied and entangled was he with his lesson."

In the midst of this little comedy, the King and Queen, with the bridal pair and all the Court, arrived at the door of the chapel, where, according to Spanish custom,

the service began. "Let them wait," exclaimed the angry cardinal, when informed of their Majesties' arrival; "I am not ready." And wait they accordingly did, while his Eminence continued his lesson, "redder than his hat and still furious. At last, he went to the door, at which a ceremony took place which lasted some time. Had I not been obliged to remain at my post, curiosity would have prompted me to follow him. That I lost some amusement is certain, for I saw the King and Queen laughing and looking at their *prie-Dieu*, and all the Court laughing also. . . . The poor cardinal caused more and more amusement while continuing the ceremony, during which he neither knew where he was nor what he was doing, being interrupted and corrected every moment by his chaplains, and fuming so that neither the King nor the Queen could contain themselves. It was the same with everybody else who witnessed the scene."

In the evening, there was a grand ball, at the conclusion of which their Majesties and the whole Court conducted the young couple to their chamber and saw them into bed.

This public *coucher* of royal persons, though practised in almost every European Court, and continued in France even after the Restoration,[1] was entirely contrary to Spanish custom, a fact which Saint-Simon attributes to "the gravity and modesty of the Spaniards." But, as, owing to the tender age of the princess, it had been decided that she should not live with her husband for at least two years, and, from the political point of view,

[1] See the author's *A Princess of Adventure* (London, Methuen; New York, Scribner, 1911), p. 60.

the Ambassador was not without uneasiness as to the solidity of "a marriage which should not be followed by, at any rate, a presumed consummation," he had demanded of the King, notwithstanding that he had received no instructions from his Court on the matter, a ceremony similar to that of which Philip V. had himself been a witness at the marriage of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne in 1697.[1] Their Catholic Majesties, he tells us, permitted him to speak without saying a word, and then looked at one another with questioning eyes. Thereupon Saint-Simon addressed to them a second and more eloquent harangue, and, after consulting together in a low voice, they eventually gave a reluctant consent.

The ceremony was carried out under the supervision of Saint-Simon himself, who declares that everything passed off exactly as he desired, that is to say, the whole crowd of courtiers was admitted to see the two children who had just been married lying in a state bed, and to bear witness that the curtains had been closed upon them in the presence of all.[2] Immediately after the departure of the Court, the prince rose and was conducted to his own apartments. Lemontey assures us that, when he was ordered to retire, he began to weep bitterly.[3] The same night, the Chevalier de Pezé, an officer in the cavalry regiment of Saint-Simon, was despatched to Versailles, to announce the "consumma-

[1] See the author's *A Rose of Savoy* (London, Methuen; New York, Scribner, 1909), p. 199.

[2] Saint-Simon assures us that when it was known that there was to be a public *coucher*, "there appeared only surprise; no one was displeased." But, according to Baudrillart (*Philippe V. et la cour de France*), the Spanish nobles were "profoundly shocked."

[3] *Histoire de la Régence.*

tion " of the marriage, for which service he was rewarded by a *gratification* of fifteen thousand livres.

On the morrow, the new Princess of the Asturias addressed to her father the following letter, which we transcribe in the original, in order that the reader may be able to judge, by its style and orthography, the kind of instruction which the young lady had received. It covers four pages of unformed characters :

" Mon chere papa, avant jere le roy la reine et le prince me vinre voire je netoit pas encore ariver ici le lendemein gi arriveret je fut marie le meme jour cepandant ili a eu aujourdhuit encore des ceremonie a faire le roi et la reine me traite fort bien pour le prince vous en aves ace ouï dire je suis avec un tres profond respec votre tres heumble et tres obisante file Louise Elisabeth."[1]

The Court of Spain, where ignorance was so general that it might almost be said to be the mode, and learning regarded with suspicion, was hardly the place in which one might expect the defects in the young princess's education to be corrected ; while its dreary, ceremonious existence must have seemed absolutely intolerable to this wayward child, fresh from the gaiety and freedom of the Palais-Royal.

Philip V. was a taciturn, melancholy, austere prince, a recluse and a devotee by taste and habits, disliking society and caring for no pleasure save shooting. Thanks to the pains which had been expended upon his education in his youth by the celebrated Fénelon, he was well-read and intelligent, and his sentiments were just and

[1] Published by Lemontey, *les Filles du Régent, Revue rétrospective*, Série I., tom. 1.

honourable. But his character was feeble in the extreme. "He was born to be governed," says Lemontey, "and he was so all his life." He had been governed by his first wife, Maria Luisa of Savoy, aided by the counsels of the Princesse des Ursins, and he was governed still more effectively by his present consort, of whom, indeed, he had become merely the reflection.

When, on the day of the late Queen's funeral, Alberoni suggested to Madame des Ursins that they should recommend the bereaved monarch to console himself with Elizabeth Farnese—"a good-natured Lombard girl, fattened on butter and Parmesan cheese," as the Minister rather coarsely described her—and Madame des Ursins, in a fatal moment for herself, consented, they assured the fortune of one of the cleverest and most ambitious women of her time. Elizabeth was not pretty, in fact, her features were almost ugly; but she possessed a beautiful, if rather opulent figure, shapely white shoulders, hands and arms, a pleasant voice, and a delicious smile, which made people forget the plainness of her face. Before she had been a month in Spain—having contrived, by an audacious *coup de main*, to get rid of Madame des Ursins *en route*—she dominated the feeble Philip entirely; though she neglected nothing to please him, and, by subordinating her own inclinations to his in matters of slight importance, prevented him from realising the extent to which his other actions were guided by her.

Perceiving that, if she would govern Spain, she must have the King continually under her eye, she encouraged his uxorious proclivities and his taste for seclusion, with the result that they passed their time in an eternal

tête-à-tête, and led a life of almost tragic monotony. The King and Queen never occupied a separate bedchamber or a separate bed. No night was ever spent apart, and from the moment when Philip was roused in the morning to partake of that weird concoction of "broth, milk, wine, yolk of egg, sugar, cinnamon and cloves," which Saint-Simon has described, to that in which they returned to the nuptial couch—it was a four-poster, scarcely four feet wide, and, according to the Spanish custom, very low—he would scarcely allow her out of his sight, except on the days when the Queen confessed; and even then, if her confession happened to last longer than usual, his Majesty would open the door and call her.

In this way, not only was Elizabeth enabled to sound her husband thoroughly, to know him by heart, so to speak, but no public business could be hidden from her. The King always worked in her presence, never otherwise; every document that he received she read and discussed with him. She was always present at all the private audiences that he gave, whether to his subjects or to the foreign Ambassadors. Nothing could possibly escape her.

Of the customary diversions of a Court there were next to none, for though the Queen was naturally of a gay and lively disposition, it was an essential part of her policy to conform in all things to her husband's tastes. State balls were of rare occurrence; though the King was rather partial to dancing, and sometimes gave an informal dance in the royal apartments. Theatrical entertainments occasionally took place, but at long intervals; gambling was severely discountenanced. Of outdoor pursuits, hunting was impossible, as beasts of

the chase were seldom met with in the plains, and the ground was so hard and rough and so scored with crevices as to render the pastime dangerous for both dogs and horses. The King, however, went shooting almost every day from April till February, during which month and March a close time was allowed the game ; but, as he was now too bulky and too indolent to walk any distance, his shooting-expeditions resolved themselves into a rather disgusting kind of battue, almost every conceivable quadruped from stags to pole-cats being driven up to the guns and ruthlessly slaughtered. The Queen invariably accompanied the King, and is said to have been an excellent shot, even bringing down pigeons—on the wing, we should perhaps add. At these battues, it was contrary to etiquette for any one to discharge his gun until the royal pair had ceased firing, by which time it often happened that there was nothing left to shoot, except wounded animals. Occasionally, however, their Majesties graciously permitted some highly-favoured noblemen to fire at the same time as themselves.

During the remaining two months of the year, the King contented himself with a daily walk and a game of pall-mall, the Queen following as he played, and applauding or condoling with him as the occasion demanded.

It was only natural that some of the younger and sprightlier members of this dreary Court should have occasionally sought relief from the ennui of such an existence in the pleasures of gallantry. But they did so at their peril ; for Philip, who was unswervingly faithful to his consort, had no indulgence for such faults, and disgraced pitilessly those who transgressed the moral

Elizabeth Farnese, Queen of Spain

From an engraving by Syfang

law.[1] The old Maréchal de Tessé, who succeeded Maulevrier as French Ambassador at the Spanish Court, and who, having known Philip from his childhood, could venture to speak to him with considerable freedom, was indignant on learning that the King had deprived of his government the Marquis de Caylus, a French nobleman who had followed him to Spain and rendered him valuable service, on an accusation of immorality brought against him by a monk. "Sire," said he, "the Dauphin, your father, and the King, your grandfather, who partook pretty freely of game of this kind, believed, however, that there were only two sins: the one, to eat meat on a Friday; the other, to have intercourse with women. Still, Sire, if you had done as they, I should pardon you; but, for my part, I tell you plainly that there is more sin in believing what a rascal of a monk asserts than in going to bed with three women." His Majesty, however, declined to view the matter in this light.

For a day or two after the arrival of the princess everything seemed to promise well. Both Philip V. and his consort gave the girl a most affectionate welcome and overwhelmed her with magnificent presents. Elizabeth Farnese, in particular, appeared to be delighted with her step-son's bride, and on the day of her arrival told Saint-Simon joyfully that she belonged to them now and that they would know how to take good care of her. But this illusion, unhappily, was to be of very short duration.

[1] An exception was made in the case of the Marqués de Santa-Cruz, whose credit survived a successful affiliation action brought against him by a woman of the middle-class. But he was a great favourite with both the King and Queen, and, besides, his wife had obtained a divorce on the ground of impotence, so that his culpability was certainly open to question.

The long journey from Paris, undertaken during the most inclement season of the year, had somewhat severely tried the princess's strength, and she arrived at Lerma suffering from a swelling of the glands of the neck, which gave her much pain. At first, she appeared a trifle better, but when the Court returned to Madrid, she became worse, and a rash appeared, which greatly alarmed the King, who believed that she was suffering from smallpox, a disease of which he entertained a morbid dread. Though assured by Saint-Simon that his daughter-in-law had already had both smallpox and measles,[1] he refused to visit her or to allow the Queen or Don Luis to do so, and insisted on the most exaggerated precautions to guard against contagion. Convinced at last that she was merely suffering from an attack of erysipelas, both he and Elizabeth Farnese went to see her, and endeavoured to atone for their neglect by lavishing upon the invalid all kinds of attentions; the Queen giving her her food and medicine with her own royal hands. But soon a new fear seized them. The King ordered Saint-Simon to visit the princess—which he had hitherto refrained from doing, aware that it was a gross violation of Spanish etiquette for a man to see a lady in bed—and to examine her as closely as she would permit. On his return, he was sent for by Philip V., whom he found, as usual, with the Queen, and speedily perceived, from the questions which they addressed to him, that they suspected that the sins of the father were being visited upon the child. He had all the difficulty in the world in persuading them that the Regent, notwithstanding the irregularity of his life, enjoyed

[1] The princess had had smallpox in 1719, and measles in the following year.

excellent health; indeed, although they protested that the Ambassador's assurances had greatly relieved them, they remained very uneasy until the girl was pronounced convalescent.

It would have been well if Élisabeth d'Orléans, whose health was soon completely re-established, had possessed as sound a mind as she did a body; for some form of mental alienation, aggravated, no doubt, by the sufferings which she had undergone and the irksome restraint to which she had been subjected during her convalescence, can alone explain the extraordinary manner in which she now conducted herself. Although the Queen had shown her great kindness and attention during her illness, and although it was but a few steps from her own apartments to those of her Majesty, she obstinately declined to go and thank her. She refused to see her doctors; stormed at her ladies when they attempted to reason with her, and when the Queen, who, notwithstanding her daughter-in-law's sullenness, continued to pay her a daily visit, ventured on some mild remonstrances, answered her with positive rudeness.

The Queen, in despair, sent for Saint-Simon and begged him to intervene. The Ambassador endeavoured to excuse himself, on the pretext that it was impossible for him to succeed where her Majesty had failed; but the latter insisted, and he was obliged to obey. He paid the erring damsel two or three visits, without getting any reply from her beyond "yes" and "no," and not always even that; and then, losing patience, "adopted the expedient of saying to her ladies, in her presence, what I should have said to her myself." The princess listened with sullen indifference to this "veritable lesson," and

uttered never a word; but, finally, she consented to visit the Queen. She went, however, *en déshabillé*, and with such bad grace, that she merely succeeded in aggravating her offence, which was no doubt her Royal Highness's intention.

But the climax of her unmannerly behaviour was reached when the time arrived for the grand State ball which was to be given in honour of her marriage, and which her illness had caused to be postponed. The princess detested dancing, for she danced abominably, and it kept her up, whereas it was her habit to retire to bed very early and rise with the lark; and, though by this time perfectly recovered, to the amazement of the Court and the mortification of their Majesties and her husband, she announced that she did not intend to appear at it. But let us listen to Saint-Simon's account of the affair.

"Everything still remained in readiness for the great ball in the Salon of the Grandees, and they waited only for the princess, who did not wish to attend. The King and Queen loved the ball, as I have mentioned elsewhere. They were looking forward with pleasure to this one, and the Prince of the Asturias likewise; and the Court awaited it with impatience. The conduct of the princess became known abroad and created the most grievous impression imaginable. I was privately advised that the King and Queen were greatly provoked by it, and, being pressed by the princess's ladies to speak to her, I went to her apartments and talked with her ladies about the princess's health, which apparently would no longer delay the pleasures which awaited her. I brought the ball on the *tapis*; I extolled the arrangement of it,

the spectacle, the magnificence ; I said that this pleasure was peculiarly suited to the princess's age ; that the King and Queen were extremely fond of it, and that they awaited with impatience the time when she would be able to go. On a sudden, she began to speak, although I was not addressing her, and cried out, like children who are fretting : 'I, to go ! I shall not go.' 'Well, Madame,' I answered ; 'you will not go ; you will be very sorry for it ; you will deprive yourself of a pleasure at which all the Court is expecting to see you, and you have too many reasons, and too much desire to please the King and Queen, to miss any opportunity of doing so.'

"She was seated and was not looking at me. But, immediately after I had spoken thus, she turned her head in my direction, and said to me, in the most decided tone that I have ever heard : 'No, Monsieur, I repeat it : I shall not go to the ball. The King and Queen will go there if they wish. They are fond of dancing ; I do not care for it. They like to rise and to go to bed late ; I to go to bed early. They will follow their inclinations, and I shall follow mine.'"

In vain Saint-Simon and her ladies endeavoured to reason with her ; in vain they represented that for so young a princess, and one who had only just arrived in Spain, to refuse to attend a ball which was given in her honour, which was being looked forward to by the King and Queen, her husband, and all the Court, and the preparations for which had entailed so much trouble and expense, was positively indecent. None of their arguments had the smallest effect upon her ; she was immovable as a rock ; and the unfortunate Ambassador had to go to the King and Queen and report the failure

of his mission. Philip V. spoke in strong terms about the capriciousness of his daughter-in-law, and when Saint-Simon " took the liberty of saying to him that he did not suppose that he wished to inconvenience himself for the caprice of a child, which was certainly the result of her illness, or to deprive his Court and all the public of so agreeable a fête," answered that it was impossible for the ball to take place without the princess.

Elizabeth Farnese made signs to the Ambassador to urge the King to give the ball, and Saint-Simon thereupon begged him to reconsider his decision, since it was most inadvisable " to accustom the princess to believe that everything was done for her, and that nothing could be done without her." But his Majesty would promise nothing.

On the morrow, the Ambassador had another conversation with the King and Queen, and reminded them that he had ventured to represent to their Majesties that they were spoiling the princess, adding that they would certainly live to repent of having done so. They, on their side, complained bitterly of the girl's obstinacy and capriciousness, of the brevity of the visits which she paid them and the curtness of her manner towards them, and of the want of consideration which she showed for her ladies. " Upon which," says Saint-Simon, " I asked them to pardon me if I told them that it was the fault of their Majesties rather than of a child who knew not what she was doing, and that, instead of accustoming her, by their excessive kindness, not to deny herself any caprice, nothing was more urgent or more important than to repress them, to make her understand her duty towards them, and to accustom her to the fear and obedience which she owed them.

However, his representations did not have much effect, for when next day he encountered them as they were starting for the chase, the Queen informed him that the State ball had been abandoned, and that orders had been given to remove the decorations which had been erected in the Salon of the Grandees; and, "with an air which I might call sheepish, if one may venture upon this term," made a sign to him to say nothing more about it.

Before entering their carriage, they announced that, "to cheer themselves up," they were giving a small ball that evening in their private apartments, which would be confined to the members of their respective Households; and to this they invited him. He went, and found that the ball was being held in the gallery on to which the apartments of the Princess of the Asturias opened. But, though this arrangement had evidently been made in the hope that her Royal Highness would condescend to put in an appearance, if only for a few moments, nothing was seen of her.

After the affair of the ball, the princess's eccentricities seemed to increase rather than diminish, and she "conducted herself in everything in the most strange manner, gallantry excepted." Towards the end of March, Saint-Simon, who was little desirous of continuing his thankless rôle of Mentor to a child who seemed to pay not the smallest attention to his long-winded remonstrances, concluded his mission and set out for France.

On March 21, he had his farewell audience of the King and Queen, both of whom received him with the utmost graciousness and expressed great regret at his departure, as did Don Luis, when he went to take leave

of him. But in another direction he met with very different treatment.

" I went, of course," he writes, " to take leave of the Princess of the Asturias, accompanied by all my suite. I found her under a daïs, standing, her ladies on one side, the grandees on the other. I made my three reverences, and then pronounced my compliment, which done, I waited in silence her reply; but in vain, for she answered me never a word. After some moments of silence, I decided to furnish her with matter for an answer, and inquired what orders she had to give me for the King, for the Infanta, for *Madame*, and for the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans. By way of reply, she looked at me and belched so loudly in my face that the noise resounded through the room. My surprise was such that I was stupefied. A second belch followed as loud as the first.

" I lost countenance at this and all power of preventing myself from laughing, and casting my eyes to right and left, I saw every one with their hands to their mouths and their shoulders in motion. At last, a third belch, still louder than the two which had preceded it, threw all present into confusion, and forced me to take to flight, followed by all my suite, amidst peals of laughter, all the louder because they forced the barriers with which every one had endeavoured to restrain himself. Spanish gravity was entirely disconcerted; all was deranged; reverences were omitted; and each person, bursting with laughter, escaped as he could, the princess all the while maintaining her countenance. In the adjoining room we all stopped to laugh at our ease, and afterwards to express our astonishment more freely."

Saint-Simon adds that the King and Queen, who were

Don Luis, Prince of the Asturias
(afterwards Luis I., King of Spain)

From an engraving by Picart, after the painting by Viali

soon informed of this adventure, were the first to laugh at it ; " so as to leave others at liberty to do so, a privilege which was very largely made use of, without any pressing." Nor does it appear to have occasioned either surprise or mortification at the Palais-Royal : indeed, the Regent, when told of it, laughed heartily.

The departure of Saint-Simon deprived the Princess of the Asturias of the only person who might have exercised some influence over her, for the Queen had grown tired of reasoning with the girl and delegated that duty to the *camerara mayor*, the Duquesa de Montellano, who, finding her remonstrances unheeded, shrugged her shoulders, and left her wilful little mistress to go her own sweet way. However, after a while, there would, if we are to believe the Regent's correspondents at Madrid, appear to have been a remarkable improvement in the princess's behaviour; and, at the end of April, Philip V.'s confessor, Père Daubenton, wrote to the Regent that " her Royal Highness was growing every day more amiable and more gracious," and that " her discretion was increasing visibly, as well as her figure." And he adds : " The Spanish admire her intelligence and her charms, and are so taken with her that they believe that she will surpass in merit her aunt, the Queen Marie Louise. This signifies much in this country." This welcome news was confirmed by the princess's own *directeur*, Père de Laubrussel, who, like the Abbé Colibeaux at Modena, had been charged by the Regent to send him regular reports ; indeed, the worthy man wrote in such eulogistic terms of his penitent, that Dubois thought it necessary to warn him that it was feared that his attachment to the princess and his desire to please

the Regent were leading him to deviate from the strict truth.

The diplomatists were of the same opinion as the ecclesiastics. At the beginning of July, Chavigny declared that " the Spaniards appeared to him to be more satisfied every day with the manners of the princess," and spoke highly of her liberality and affability towards the poor, with whom she was now able to converse in their own language.[1] And, towards the end of August, Robin, first secretary of the French Embassy, writes: " The Princess of the Asturias is still the object of the affections of the Royal Family and of the admiration of all the Court. The proofs of her delicate and lofty mind reveal themselves every moment. . . . She is gaining hearts."

These eulogies must be accepted with considerable reserve, and, as we have seen, they certainly were so received at the Palais-Royal, for, for different reasons, every one of the writers desired to flatter the Orléans family. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that, at this time, the young princess was showing a much more accommodating disposition, which encouraged the hope that her eccentricities had been largely due to her recent illness. This was particularly noticeable in regard to her husband, for whom in the little intercourse that had been permitted them she had hitherto shown a marked indifference.

Don Luis was a tall, slight, delicate-looking lad, with beautiful fair hair and aquiline features which recalled

[1] Despatch of July 1, 1722, published by Barthélemy. But Chavigny adds: " She has still some puerilities, which age, experience, and her own good-sense will correct."

those of his maternal grandfather, Victor Amadeus II. of Savoy, now King of Sardinia. He was of an amiable disposition, honourable, well-meaning, and very deferential towards his father and stepmother; he shot well, was skilful at all games, and danced admirably; but his education had been much neglected, and he was excessively shy, awkward, and indolent. Notwithstanding the coldness of his child-wife, he had conceived for her from the first a warm affection, and his joy was great when he perceived a change in her demeanour towards him.

In May 1722, the prince fell ill, and, though his indisposition does not appear to have been of a very serious nature, he was obliged to keep his bed for some days. During this time, the princess, repenting apparently of her former unkindness, insisted on helping to nurse him, and refused even to leave the sick-room until he had recovered. Don Luis, deeply touched by what he considered a proof of awakening affection, though it was probably nothing but a new caprice, became from that moment her adoring slave, anticipating her slightest wish and humouring her in every conceivable way. The King and Queen, so far from checking, appear to have encouraged this premature uxoriousness, which naturally tended to give the young lady an even more exalted opinion of her own importance than she already possessed.

CHAPTER XV

Ambitions of Elizabeth Farnese in regard to her eldest son, Don Carlos —The Regent determines to offer to the latter the hand of his fifth daughter, Mlle. de Beaujolais—Beauty and amiable character of the little princess—The affair is satisfactorily concluded—Joy of the Queen of Spain—Dowry of Mlle. de Beaujolais—Her trousseau —She sets out for Spain—Her reception at Madrid—Mutual affection of Mlle. de Beaujolais and her *fiancé*—The little princess conquers all hearts—Jealousy of her elder sister—The Prince and Princess of the Asturias begin to live together—Their affectionate relations—Resumption of the eccentricities of the princess—Abdication of Philip V. in favour of his eldest son.

TOWARDS the end of the summer of 1722, negotiations were concluded for a third alliance between the two great branches of the House of Bourbon.

Almost from the moment of the birth of her eldest son, Don Carlos, in 1716, it had been the cherished dream of Elizabeth Farnese to secure for him a principality in Italy, either in Tuscany or in Parma, to the succession in both of which she possessed claims. The interests of the little prince were not her only object. The health of Philip V. gave frequent cause for anxiety, and Elizabeth knew that the situation of a widowed queen in Spain, compelled to live in some convent on a meagre pension irregularly paid, was no enviable one. She was resolved not to be subjected to such a fate, but to prepare for herself a dignified retreat in her native land, to which, in the event of her husband's death, she might withdraw and "find consolation *en petit* for that which she had lost *en grand*." [1]

[1] Saint-Simon.

The French Government was well aware of Elizabeth's ambitions, which, it feared, might not improbably lead her to make overtures to the Court of Vienna for a marriage between Don Carlos and one of the archduchesses, which must neutralize to a large extent the matrimonial arrangements recently concluded. The Regent accordingly determined to forestall such an alliance, by offering to Don Carlos the hand of his fifth daughter, Mlle. de Beaujolais. By this means, he would not only secure a double hold on Spain, but gratify his own family pride, since he could hardly hope for a more illustrious *parti* for the little princess.

Philippine Elizabeth, Mlle. de Beaujolais, was now seven years old, having been born on December 18, 1714. She bade fair to be the pick of the basket, being an exceedingly pretty, bright and intelligent little girl, and, in contrast to her sisters, of a sweet-tempered, modest and affectionate disposition. *Madame* was devoted to her, and the child visited the old princess almost every day. "She is a charming child," she writes, at the end of March 1718, "pretty, lively, and amusing; I am warmly attached to her; she will not want for intelligence." And a year later: "The little Beaujolais is prettier and more attractive than ever." Well indeed was it for this charming child that political exigencies were about to remove her from the vitiating atmosphere of the Palais-Royal, and the evil influence of her family, to a Court in which, whatever its faults, youth and innocence were rigidly guarded!

In April 1722, the first overtures relative to this alliance were made by Chavigny to the Spanish Prime Minister, Grimaldo, and very favourably received by that

personage. Chavigny found still more valuable allies in Laura Pescatori, formerly the Queen's nurse, who had followed Elizabeth to Spain and been promoted to the post of *azafata*, and in Père Daubenton, though it is hardly probable that their Majesties required much pressing, since the Queen was well aware of the strength which the pretensions of Don Carlos would derive from the support of France, and the King was quite content to be guided by her wishes. It was, however, the aged confessor who negotiated the affair, and on June 23 we find him writing to Dubois that "his Catholic Majesty, after having conferred with the Queen, consented willingly to this matter, on condition that his Royal Highness [the Regent] would employ all his forces, conjointly with Spain, to assure the States of Tuscany and Parma to the Infant Don Carlos." [1]

Philippe d'Orléans, though naturally delighted at the ready acceptance of his proposal, judged it advisable to keep the affair secret until August, when he received from the Court of Madrid a formal demand for his daughter's hand. "His Royal Highness," writes Dubois to Destouches, on August 12, "received yesterday a letter by a special courier from the King and Queen of Spain, in which they demanded Mlle. de Beaujolais in marriage for Don Carlos, their son, which was received, as you may judge, with much gratitude. They paid this compliment to his Royal Highness without the knowledge of their Ministers at Madrid, or of those whom we have at their Court."[2]

On the same day, the official announcement was made

[1] Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la cour de France.*
[2] *Ibid.*

in Paris, and *Madame's* joy at the news was such as actually to overcome for the moment her old hatred of Dubois, to whom she addressed an effusive letter, expressing her delight "at seeing her dear Mlle. de Beaujolais so well established," and congratulating him upon the success of his diplomacy.

The delight of Elizabeth Farnese was not less when the Regent's acceptance reached her. "I must be carried away," writes the English Ambassador, Stanhope, to Carteret, "by that torrent of French power and favour, which increases every day, and particularly since this last marriage, upon which the Queen shows a joy inexpressible." [1] Her Majesty caused the Escurial, where the Court was then in residence, to be illuminated and a *Te Deum* to be sung; while, at the same time, she wrote to the Regent: "The portrait of the Princesse de Beaujolais which you have sent us has charmed us all: one would be unable to behold a more charming and more lovable child. Her little husband is transported with joy, and is too happy to possess so charming a princess."

The articles of the marriage-contract of Don Carlos and Mlle. de Beaujolais were drawn up in Paris on November 25, and signed at the Louvre the following day. They provided that the princess was to proceed at once to Spain, to be brought up there until she had reached a marriageable age. The dowry of the princess was fixed, like that of her sister, the Princess of the Asturias, at 400,000 écus given by the King of France, 40,000 by her father, and 50,000 in jewels by the King of Spain. Louis XV. also presented her with a number of jewels, including a pair of diamond earrings; while among the Regent's gifts was

[1] Mr. Edward Armstrong, *Elizabeth Farnese.*

a cross of pearls and diamonds. The inventory of her trousseau makes curious reading. Besides a number of costly gowns of silk, satin, or velvet, and the materials required for replacing them when she had outgrown them, and a large selection of hats, bonnets, gloves, shoes, slippers and stockings, she was provided with " four bed-quilts, two and a half dozen curling-tongs, twenty-six tortoise-shell combs, six powder-puffs, six dozen pillow-cases, twelve dozen handkerchiefs, six dozen night-gowns, twelve fans, four packets of tooth-picks, and forty-two thousand pins." [1]

Thus equipped, on December 1 Mlle. de Beaujolais set out for Spain, in charge of the Duc and Duchesse de Duras and their daughter, the Duchesse de Fitz-James—it is worthy of note that the two duchesses had taken the precaution to demand and obtain from the Regent the honours of the *soupcoupe* before starting—and escorted by her half-brother, the Chevalier d'Orléans, and a detachment of the Gardes du Corps. The Regent and the Duc de Chartres travelled with her as far as Bourg-la-Reine, as they had with the Princess of the Asturias, twelve months before.

In crossing the Gironde, at Blaye, in the teeth of a violent gale, the little princess was very nearly drowned, but otherwise her journey was uneventful; and on January 26, 1723, she crossed the Bidassoa, on the southern bank of which the Duque de Ossuna and the Condesa de Liria, her *camerara mayor*, were awaiting her.

The Duc de Duras having formally delivered the princess into the charge of the Spanish nobleman and the usual presents having been exchanged, the French escort

[1] Barthélemy.

PHILIPPINE ÉLISABETH D'ORLÉANS (MLLE. DE BEAUJOLAIS)

From a contemporary print

took leave of her, with the exception of the Chevalier d'Orléans, who was to accompany his half-sister to Madrid, and Mlle. de Beaujolais continuing her route, arrived on February 14 at Buytrago, a day's journey from the capital, whither all the Royal Family had come to welcome her.

The reception accorded the princess was a most flattering one, and Don Carlos, an amiable and intelligent little boy, was delighted with his *fiancée*, who, on her side, seemed equally pleased with him. Elizabeth Farnese hastened to apprise the Palais-Royal of the safe arrival of the little traveller and of the affection which the two children seemed to have so quickly conceived for one another.

" I believe," she writes to the Regent, " that you will not be displeased to learn of her first interview with her little husband. They embraced very affectionately and kissed one another, and it appears to me that he does not displease her. Thus, since this evening they do not like to leave one another. She says a hundred pretty things ; one would not credit the things that she says, unless one heard them. She has the mind of an angel, and my son is only too happy to possess her. . . . She has charged me to tell you that she loves you with all her heart, and that she is quite content with her husband." And to the Duchesse d'Orléans she writes : " I find her the most beautiful and most lovable child in the world. It is the most pleasing thing imaginable to see her with her little husband : how they caress one another and how they love one another already. They have a thousand little secrets to tell one another, and they cannot part for an instant."[1]

There can be no doubt that this testimony was perfectly

[1] Barthélemy.

sincere, for almost from the moment of her arrival the beauty, grace and amiability of this charming child conquered all hearts, and every one, from the King and Queen downwards, vied with one another in efforts to please her and to reconcile her to her new life. Their task was an easy one, for Mlle. de Beaujolais had quitted France at too early an age to have been admitted to the pleasures in which the Princess of the Asturias had been allowed so unwisely to participate. Consequently, the austerity of the Court of Madrid did not repel her, as it had her sister, and she was perfectly content with the childish amusements provided for her ; while the solicitude and affection of which she found herself the object must have been a welcome contrast to the indifference and neglect to which she had been accustomed at the Palais-Royal.

But there was one person at the Court who was very far from sharing the general sentiment in regard to the newcomer. The Princess of the Asturias had never had the smallest affection for the little sister whose character differed so widely from her own ; and, though she affected to receive her with much affection and wrote to the Regent to express her joy at her arrival, she was in reality consumed with jealousy and mortification, and was soon quite unable to disguise her feelings. " If I may be permitted to open my mind to your Royal Highness," writes the Chevalier d'Orléans to the Regent, " I should confess to you that I very much fear that she [Mlle. de Beaujolais] is exciting the jealousy of the Princess of the Asturias, who has not failed to be annoyed by this little princess coming here, and has even expressed her chagrin in a bitter manner."

In consequence, though Père de Laubrussel assured the Regent that "the two sisters were very united," they appear to have seen very little of each other—a fact which the worthy Jesuit, who was evidently determined to say nothing but good of his penitent, attributes to the reluctance of Mlle. de Beaujolais to interrupt her elder sister's studies, to which, according to him, she was now devoting herself with the most praiseworthy application.

With her husband the Princess of the Asturias continued on excellent terms, so much so, indeed, that in August Philip V. decided that the young couple should be definitely united. This great event took place at the Escurial on Saint-Louis's Day (August 18), when the King and Queen solemnly conducted Don Luis in his *robe de chambre* to his wife's bedchamber, and left them together.

From that time, the prince and princess lived together as man and wife, and were so devoted that even a brief separation was sufficient to cause them genuine distress. Thus, when, at the end of September, Don Luis had to go to San-Ildefonso, they parted amidst floods of tears, exclaiming: "*Adios, mujer! adios, marido!*"

But if the Princess of the Asturias had become to all appearance an affectionate and dutiful wife, in other respects her behaviour was far from satisfactory, and, whereas a few months before she had seemed anxious to remove the bad impression she had at first created, she had lately begun to conduct herself in a manner which shocked and scandalized this punctilious Court and threatened to render her profoundly unpopular.

So little regard had she for the cherished privileges of the nobility that one day, in the palace gardens, observing

that certain gentlemen remained covered in her presence, she inquired if it were raining—an impertinence which naturally aroused extreme indignation among the grandees. She had developed a taste for vulgar and malicious practical jokes, and one of her favourite amusements was to discharge water from a hose concealed in her apartments over the people who passed beneath her windows; while one day, at a Court ceremony, she surreptitiously severed the string of the Duquesa de Altamira's petticoats, with the most embarrassing consequences for the lady in question. Her manners at table, too, were characterized by "a disgusting slovenliness, concerning which their Majesties have testified their pain and surprise, although they have said nothing to her about it"; and, on the pretext of the extreme heat of the Spanish summer, she scarcely ever wore either stockings or petticoats, and on the rare occasions on which she condescended to make a complete toilette did so in the most negligent fashion.

All this was the more regrettable, since at the beginning of 1724 an event took place which caused the most profound sensation throughout Europe, and made her, nominally at least, the first lady in Spain.

In the last days of 1723, the French Government was warned by the Abbé de Coulanges, its *chargé d'affaires* at Madrid—the post of Ambassador was at the moment vacant, Maulevrier having recently been recalled—that Philip V. was suffering from religious mania, and intended to resign his throne. The Duc de Bourbon, who, on the death of the Regent on December 23, had been appointed to the post of First Minister, was greatly alarmed, and lost no time in instructing the old Maréchal de Tessé to

PHILIP V., KING OF SPAIN

From a contemporary print

proceed as Ambassador to Madrid, and use every persuasion to induce the King to renounce a resolution which would so greatly enhance the importance of the House of Orléans, between which and the Condés the bitterest enmity existed. But he was too late, for on January 10, 1724, before Tessé had even left Paris, Philip V. abdicated his throne in favour of the Prince of the Asturias, and announced his intention of "applying himself during the remainder of his days to the service of God and to solitude."

The abdication of Philip V. was the outcome of no sudden impulse: he had been contemplating it for some time past, and had merely waited until his eldest son should be old enough to assume the responsibilities of sovereignty. In taking this step, he seems to have been actuated solely by his religious scruples. He was subject to constantly recurring attacks of melancholia, in which he was tormented by agonies of fear that he had offended his Maker almost beyond hope of forgiveness, and he craved for the leisure and solitude which he considered necessary to reconciliation. Few of his contemporaries, however, were inclined to accept so simple an explanation. They could not bring themselves to believe that Philip's high-spirited and ambitious consort would have tamely concurred in such a renunciation, unless she had seen in it the probability of obtaining abundant compensation for the position she was surrendering; and it was the general opinion that the underlying motive of the King's abdication was the desire to facilitate his accession to the throne of France, in the event of the death of Louis XV. For, if he were no longer King of Spain, his renunciation of the Crown of France would no longer be binding upon him.

It is very improbable that Philip was influenced by any such calculation, although it is quite conceivable that, had Louis XV. died during the next few months, he would have been ready enough to take advantage of the coincidence, since his acceptance of the Crown of Spain and his renunciation of that of France formed an important element in the religious mania from which he suffered. Nor would this peculiar form of political speculation have been likely to appeal to Elizabeth Farnese, greatly as she might desire translation to the throne of a country so much more congenial to her than Spain, and where dowager-queens were treated with every honour. The fact is that Elizabeth consented to her husband's abdication, because she could not prevent it. Her influence over the King was immense, but it was not proof against his religious scruples.

CHAPTER XVI

The accession of Luis I. hailed with great satisfaction at Madrid—The new King reigns only nominally, and Philip V. and Elizabeth, from their retreat at San-Ildefonso, continue to govern—Docility of Luis to his father's wishes—His boyish pranks—The young Queen, freed from all constraint, treats her husband with contempt, and behaves in an extraordinary manner—She accuses her major-domo, Foucault de Magny, of grossly insulting her—Despatch of the Maréchal de Tessé to the Duc de Bourbon—Magny is recalled to France—Antipathy of Elizabeth Farnese towards her daughter-in-law—Curious despatches of Tessé—Despair of Luis I. at the outrageous behaviour of his consort—Episode at San-Ildefonso—The young Queen, refusing to listen to any remonstrances, is conducted to the Alcazar and kept in close confinement—After a captivity of nearly three weeks, she is set at liberty and restored to favour—Illness and death of Luis I.—Pitiable situation of his widow, the Court of Spain being unwilling to keep her or France to receive her—It is finally decided that she shall return to France—Rupture of the marriage arranged between Louis XV. and the Infanta—Indignation of the Court of Spain—The widowed Queen and Mlle. de Beaujolais are sent back to France—Sad life of the former—Her death—Constancy of Don Carlos and Mlle. de Beaujolais—Negotiations for their marriage—Attitude of Fleury—Death of the princess.

BORN on August 25, 1707, Luis I. was little more than sixteen when he ascended the throne. Nevertheless, this event was hailed with great satisfaction by the Spaniards, and in particular by the inhabitants of Madrid, with whom the cold, melancholy Philip and his Italian wife were extremely unpopular; whereas the new King, born and brought up among them and attached both by habit and inclination to the manners and customs of the country, was regarded with sympathy and affection; and

when, in accordance with ancient custom, his accession was proclaimed in the streets of the capital by the cry of "*Castilla, oid, oid, oid, por Luis primero, Rey de Castilla, Leon y Arragon!*" the enthusiasm of the populace knew no bounds.[1]

Nothing could have been more formal than Philip's renunciation of power; he had taken a solemn oath never to resume it; he had even donned the little habit of St. Francis.[2] Of all the Ministers and great officers of the Royal Household, none save Grimaldo and his chamberlain Valouse followed him into retirement. The Queen retained only Laura Pescatori and five of her waiting-women. The establishment at San-Ildefonso was limited to sixty persons, and it was only with difficulty that Philip was persuaded to accept a small body of guards. His pension was fixed at 480,000 piastres, with reversion to the Queen in the event of his death.

But it was merely the appearance, and not the reality, which Philip had renounced, and it was from San-Ildefonso, and not from Madrid, that Spain was governed. This may have been partly due to the counsels of Tessé, who had visited the ex-monarch before proceeding to Madrid and begged him to retain control over his son; but the Queen and Grimaldo had already taken steps to secure the subordination of the young King. Before surrendering his Crown, Philip had confided the Government to a Cabinet Council composed of seven persons, with Don Luis de Miraval, President of Castile, at their head, all of whom were either nonentities or persons who owed everything to Grimaldo. Every matter discussed by the

[1] Baudrillart.
[2] Mr. Edward Armstrong, *Elizabeth Farnese.*

Cabinet at Madrid was immediately communicated to the Court of San-Ildefonso, and no decision was ever arrived at until its views had been ascertained.

The new King, always a model of filial obedience, never dreamed of protesting against this tutelage. He had begun by making lavish grants of pensions and places, but, on the representations of Philip, he immediately cancelled them and continued to conform in every respect to his father's wishes. One day, the young Queen happened to be particularly anxious that something should be done of which San-Ildefonso had expressed its disapproval. When her husband refused, she grew angry, sulked, wept, and ended by exclaiming: "Are you not the King, and am I not the Queen?" "Yes," was the grave reply. "I am the King, and you are the Queen; but the King, my father, is my master and yours." [1]

It was well that the young monarch showed such admirable docility, for he was as yet quite unfitted to take upon himself the cares of State. Not only was he very ignorant and extremely lazy, but he was in character a mere child, and, having been very strictly brought up, conducted himself during his first days of liberty very much like a colt which, after a long confinement in the stable, is suddenly transferred to the freedom of the paddock. "So sudden an elevation at so early an age," observes Coxe, "gave scope to the thoughtlessness of youthful levity. He was at first inattentive to business, and so careless of public respect, that he often sallied forth at night, in disguise, to scour the streets of the capital, or to strip the royal gardens of their fruit, that he might, the following morning, be gratified with the frivolous pleasure

[1] Tessé to Morville, June 5, 1724, in Baudrillart.

of witnessing the vexation of the gardeners." Another and more objectionable diversion of his Catholic Majesty, which the reverend historian is apparently too modest to mention, was his habit of prowling about the corridors of the palace, in the company of three or four of his pages, and bursting open the bedroom-doors of his wife's ladies-in-waiting.

It is satisfactory, however, to learn that " these first ebullitions of youth rapidly subsided. He respected the remonstrances of his father, who urged that such irregularities would dishonour his Crown, and diminish the respect and affection of his people. This docility afforded a presage that, when he attained the age of reflection, and his understanding was matured by experience, he would not disappoint the predilection with which he was regarded by the nation." [1]

The conduct of the young Queen inspired far greater uneasiness. The splendour of her new position had, as might have been anticipated, proved altogether too much for the girl's ill-balanced mind ; and now, freed from all constraint, she proceeded to indulge to the full her wayward fancies, and behaved in a manner which was not only eccentric, but at times positively indecent. She very quickly showed that the affection and deference she had displayed towards her husband during the last months of Philip V.'s reign had been a mere passing caprice, and treated him with the most humiliating coldness and disdain. When they rode together in the royal coach, she would deliberately turn her back upon him. At table, she would sit in stony silence, watching his Majesty eat and

[1] *History of the Bourbons of Spain.* The archdeacon's authority is a despatch of Stanhope to Carteret, dated April 15, 1724.

drink, without touching a morsel herself, and immediately the meal was over, hurry away and share the repast of her ladies-in-waiting. She ate enormously, at all hours, and would insist upon her ladies doing likewise, waiting upon them herself, and scolding and slapping them if they refused to eat. She would go for country-walks with her dress pulled up to her knees, displaying her bare legs, for, as we have said, she usually discarded both stockings and petticoats, and sometimes would not return until long after darkness had fallen. In short, she appeared never so happy as when "ridiculing that etiquette which had been sanctioned by ages, and scandalizing this grave Court and punctilious nation by her indiscreet, if not licentious, behaviour." [1]

Towards the end of April 1724, an incident occurred which made a great scandal and prejudiced public opinion more seriously against the young Queen than any of her previous escapades. It will be remembered that on the occasion of the ball given by the Duchesse de Berry in honour of the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine early in 1718, a disturbance had been created by a certain Foucault de Magny, an uninvited guest, who subsequently spent a few days in the Bastille. Not long afterwards, Magny, having been compromised in the Cellamare conspiracy, was obliged to take refuge in Spain, where he was well received by Philip V., and rose so rapidly to favour that, after being governor of the Infants, he was appointed major-domo to the new Queen. This last promotion, however, was to prove his undoing.

One fine morning, it happened that her youthful Majesty, dressed as usual "*sans bas ni jupes*," had

[1] Coxe.

climbed to the top of a long ladder which had been left standing in her apartments, when she was seized with fear and called for help. Magny, who, unluckily for himself, was in an adjoining room, hearing her cry of distress, hurried to the spot, sprang up the ladder, and assisted her to descend. He imagined that he had rendered her a service; but, to his horror and indignation, he learned, a few hours later, that she had complained that he had endeavoured to outrage her during their progress down the ladder, and that her resistance alone had protected her honour.

The absurdity of such a charge was manifest, for all the Queen's ladies had been gathered at the foot of the ladder while the unfortunate major-domo was assisting their mistress to descend; but the mad-brained girl persisted in it, and, unless some way out of the difficulty could be found, it would be necessary for M. de Magny's head to part company with his body.

To prevent this tragic *dénouement* and to hush up so terrible a scandal, Philip V. and his consort sent for Tessé, and begged him to get Magny recalled immediately to France. This the Ambassador promised to do, and addressed urgent representations on the subject to the Duc de Bourbon, at the same time throwing all the blame on the young Queen. "As for the imprudence that he [Magny] has committed with the Queen," he writes, "if there is any one worthy of blame, it is she, who has claimed undeserved credit for a thing of which the poor devil was innocent. She had climbed to the top of a ladder . . . she thought she was going to fall and cried out for help. Magny mounted and assisted her to descend, before all her women; but, unless he were blind, it must needs be

that he saw that which certainly he did not seek to see, and which it is her habit to show very freely. The Queen accused him of being insolent. In truth, one is not so with these ladies, except when they wish to compel us." [1]

The humiliation of a member of the detested Orléans family occasioned *Monsieur le Duc* such lively satisfaction that he was very far from anxious to assist in hushing up this adventure; and it was only after considerable pressure from Elizabeth Farnese that he finally consented to recall Magny. "I forgot to thank you," writes she to Tessé, "for what you have done for Magny. If I could have thought that would have caused so much difficulty yonder, I should not have opened my mouth, for I have nothing to do with him. But I have acted merely out of charity; to protect the young woman who was concerned in it, and who is so nearly related to us."

On his arrival in France, Magny found awaiting him a *lettre de cachet* forbidding him to approach Paris. He also learned that his wife had seized upon his property, and that, after a life of comparative affluence, he was now threatened with poverty. However, he was a person of both courage and resource, and the buffetings of Fortune appear to have affected him but little. Any way, he lived to a patriarchal age, and died, at his château of Magny, in July 1772, in his ninety-seventh year.

Although Elizabeth Farnese had exerted herself to hush up this miserable affair, it was certainly not out of affection for the young Queen, for whom she had now conceived the most violent dislike, which was no doubt

[1] Despatch of April 31, in Lemontey, *les Filles du Regent*, *Revue rétrospective*, Série I. tome 1.

as much due to jealousy at seeing her in possession of those honours which had once been reserved for herself as to any other reason. "The Queen, the wife of Philip, cannot endure her," writes Tessé to his patron at Versailles. And again: "The Queen [Elizabeth Farnese] has said to me: 'We have made a terrible acquisition; she will be like her sisters, if she is not worse.'" [1]

If we are to take the despatches of Tessé *au pied de la lettre*—it is only fair to Élisabeth d'Orléans to observe that some historians are of opinion that the Ambassador consistently exaggerated her eccentricities, in order to please *Monsieur le Duc*—the young lady would certainly appear to be going the right way to emulate the exploits of the Duchesse de Berry and the Princess of Modena.

He says that there was almost every evening "*une petite fondation de litanies*," between the Queen and three or four of her maids-of-honour, and that these litanies were "composed of the worst indecencies and the most significant expressions." He also says that, in the condition of our first parents, and with her arms and legs tied to a stick passed behind her knees, her Majesty would frequently engage with these same favourites in a bout of "cock-fighting"—a game which, if harmless enough in itself, was certainly a most unsuitable diversion for a Queen.

The poor young King was in despair at the conduct of his wife, and Tessé wrote that he had been told by their Majesties at San-Ildefonso that Luis had confessed to them that he would "prefer to be a galley-slave rather than live with a creature who observed no decorum and no complaisance towards him, and who thought only of

[1] Despatches of February 28 and April 7, 1725, in Barthélemy.

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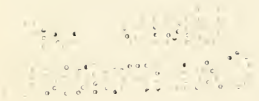
Luis I., King of Spain

From a painting by an unknown artist



eating and of exhibiting herself in a nude condition, to the great scandal of the humblest of her servants; that it was not proper for a Queen of Spain to lead this kind of life, of which he was unable to correct her; for, though he had spoken to her about it three times in private, she had only laughed at his remonstrances."

At the end of June, the young couple, "who had been living like dog and cat," went on a visit to the ex-King and Queen at San-Ildefonso. Philip V., overcoming his natural timidity in order to obey the formal injunctions of his confessor, summoned the young Queen to his cabinet, and spoke to her very strongly indeed, "threatening to have her shut up in a convent if she did not mend her ways, and assuring her that his son would approve these severe measures." [1] The girl wept copiously and "appeared touched by repentance"; but the following morning, Philip, happening to look out of his window, perceived his daughter-in-law promenading the gardens —in which a number of labourers were just then at work —clad only in a chemise and a dressing-gown, with which latter garment the wind, which had risen during the night, was taking curious liberties.

The two Kings therefore decided that, if her Majesty's behaviour did not show an improvement within forty-eight hours of her return to Madrid, she should be shut up in her apartments and kept there for some time, to give her leisure for repentance.

A day or two later, the royal pair set out for Madrid. It was an unpleasant journey, for, "as soon as she [the Queen] entered the carriage with the King, she turned her back upon him, sulked, and did not say a word the

[1] Tessé to the Duc de Bourbon, July 2, 1724.

whole way." On their arrival at the Retiro, where they were then residing, her Majesty resumed her irregular habits; and on July 4 Luis, at the end of his patience, resolved to put into execution the plan which he and his father had decided upon.

Accordingly, he sent for Valero and the Duquesa de Altamira, the Queen's major-domo and *camerara mayor*, and was closeted with them for more than an hour. When the Queen was entering her carriage for her daily drive in the Prado, the duchess presented herself, and showed her an order from the King, directing her to accompany her mistress, although she had been for some time excused this service, on account of her age. She then took her seat opposite the Queen, while the ladies in attendance followed in another carriage. As they were returning, *the camerara mayor* showed the Queen a second order, directing her to conduct her Majesty not to the Retiro, but to the Alcazar. The officer in command of her escort exhibited an order to the same effect. The Queen fell into a transport of rage and cried out repeatedly: "To the Retiro!" But her protests were unheeded, and she was driven to the Alcazar, and carried, struggling and screaming, to her apartments, where Valero had got everything in readiness for her reception. Here she was left, with the Duquesa de Altamira, two maids-of-honour, and one of her *maîtres-d'hôtel*, under a strong guard. The same evening, her arrest was officially announced in a circular letter to the foreign Ministers.[1]

As envoy of the Duc de Bourbon, charged by him to counteract in every way the influence of the House of Orléans, Tessé could not but rejoice at a misadventure so

[1] Coxe, *History of the Bourbons of Spain.*

humiliating to the young Queen, and did not fail to inform his patron of the details, with many malicious interpretations and sombre prognostications for the future of the royal *ménage*. But, as Ambassador of France, it was his duty to appear to interest himself in the fate of a French princess; and accordingly on the morrow he presented himself at the King's *lever*, and, having demanded an audience of his Majesty, inquired what explanation of the affair he was to send his Government.

"It is," said the King, "a mortification which I wished to inflict on the Queen to correct her conduct. I have spoken to her several times, and my father has done likewise; but it has had no effect upon her." "Sire," replied Tessé, "I recognise clearly that they are but childish follies, natural to persons of her age, wherein there is nothing criminal, and that it is a punishment which your Majesty intends to inflict upon her, and which will have the result I hope for." "Yes," rejoined the King, "we shall see whether this mortification will correct her. You may send an account of the matter to France."

After a week had passed, during which the Queen remained in very close confinement, permission to take a walk in the palace gardens being even refused, the Ambassador felt it to be his duty to remark upon the prolongation of her captivity, and to suggest that, as her Majesty was a French princess, a few words of paternal advice from himself might not be out of place. Luis, however, begged him to wait, promising to inform him when he judged that the time had arrived when such counsel might be usefully tendered.

It was not, indeed, until nearly a fortnight later (July

23), that the King authorised Tessé to visit his captive consort, at the same time informing him that he proposed to set her at liberty that same evening, if the Ambassador found her in a chastened mood. Tessé lost no time in repairing to the Alcazar, where he found the Queen looking none the worse for her detention, and proceeded to give her a mild lecture, pointing out that the happiness of her life depended on herself alone. Her Majesty frankly acknowledged that half the imputations against her were true, but maintained that the other half were false, and that, however foolishly she might have acted, she had been guilty of nothing criminal. She expressed contrition for her faults, promised amendment, and entreated her husband's forgiveness.

On leaving her, Tessé returned to the King to report the result of his visit. Luis, satisfied that his wife was now penitent, sent the Prince of Cellamare to inquire at what time the Queen wished to drive that afternoon, and timed his own return from the chase so that their carriages should meet near the Puente Verde. The Queen alighted and knelt to kiss her husband's hand; but Luis raised her up, embraced her tenderly, and brought her in his own carriage to the Retiro, where he presented her with a magnificent parure of diamonds, as a pledge of his forgiveness. The King, indeed, seemed anxious to make amends for the publicity of her disgrace by giving equal publicity to her restoration to favour, and there can be no doubt that he was still genuinely attached to his wife and most anxious to live with her on amicable terms. But the girl, resenting the precaution he had taken to prevent a repetition of her worst irregularities by the dismissal of the greater number of her maids-of-honour, refused to

give him the slightest encouragement, and though she treated him in public with all due deference, her manner was almost as cold and distant as before.

Possibly, if the young King's life had been spared a little longer, Élisabeth d'Orléans might have recognised her mistake and learned to appreciate the good qualities of her husband. But within a few weeks of her release from the Alcazar she found herself a widow.

Luis I. had always been of a somewhat delicate constitution, and he had also greatly overtaxed his strength in his passion for physical exercises. On August 15, he was seized with repeated attacks of faintness and compelled to take to his bed, and a few days later smallpox declared itself. The disease appeared to be following a normal course, and though the King was suffering a good deal, his condition did not inspire any great anxiety, when, on the evening of the 25th, his physicians most imprudently decided to bleed him. The royal patient at once experienced an alarming relapse, and by the morning of the 30th his case was pronounced hopeless.

When informed of his approaching end, the poor lad showed the most touching resignation. Without a word of regret for his youth and his throne, he observed to those about him that he would be that evening in Paradise, and then proceeded to execute a deed, whereby he returned to his father all that he had received from him, and authorised him to dispose of his private property as he thought fit. He concluded by recommending the Queen very particularly to his care. On the morrow (August 31), he expired, having completed his seventeenth year a few days before.

During the King's illness, his father and stepmother did

not come near him; but his wife moved to his apartments, and remained there until the end, although such was the fear which the disease inspired in her ladies that not one of them could be prevailed upon to accompany her mistress. It would appear, however, that the young Queen's devotion to her sick husband was not voluntary, and Lemontey assures us that, since she had not had smallpox,[1] and it was quite possible that she was enceinte, she was compelled to remain by the King's bedside, in the hope that she might contract the disease in a fatal form, and thus extricate the Court of Spain from what might prove a most embarrassing situation. "I can hardly doubt," he writes, "the odious intention of this constraint, when I read in the letter of the Duchesse de Saint-Pierre,[2] written on the eve of the King's death, these too significant words: 'There is nothing which they have not done to make her [the Queen] take the smallpox.'" [3]

In fact, the girl did contract the disease which had robbed her of her husband, though not in a dangerous form. Her convalescence, however, was slow, and it was not until the first week in November that she was pronounced cured. Tessé, who visited her on the 2nd, reports that she had grown very much, but that her person was "more neglected and more slovenly than that of a waitress in a *cabaret*;" adding some coarse reflections which we forbear to transcribe.

No one, indeed, appeared to have a good word to say for the unfortunate girl, who had lost in her husband her

[1] As a matter of fact, the Queen had had smallpox in 1719.

[2] She was a sister of the French Minister, the Marquis de Torcy and an intimate friend of Elizabeth Farnese.

[3] *Les Filles du Regent, Revue rétrospective*, Série I, tome 1.

sole protector, and whose situation was a really pitiable one. Philip V., who had been persuaded by Elizabeth Farnese and her partisans to resume the Crown, to the intense disgust of the majority of the nation, who would have infinitely preferred the succession of his second son, Don Fernando, was feverishly anxious to get rid of her. "In God's name," said he to Tessé, three days after the death of the young king, "make them understand that we shall open every door, and furnish her, by means of certain revenues, with the opportunity of returning to France; while his wife, who appeared to entertain a very poor opinion of the virtue of her daughter-in-law, predicted that, if she remained in Spain, they would receive one fine morning news of some terrible scandal. And their Majesties," writes the Ambassador, "told me that, since the death of the King, she had indulged in transports of joy, and conducted herself in a manner so extraordinary, that decency does not permit me to repeat the frightful things that they have told me."

The widowed Queen, on her side, would have been only too willing to shake the dust of her adopted country off her feet; but unfortunately the French Government was as little anxious to receive her as were her Spanish relatives to keep her, and Tessé received instructions to do everything possible to prevent her returning to France. However, after several weeks' correspondence on the subject, Elizabeth Farnese, who had been studying her daughter-in-law's marriage-contract, found there a clause which provided that, in the event of the princess being left a widow without children, she should have the right, if she so desired, of returning to France; and triumphantly drew Tessé's attention to it. In the face of this

discovery, it was, of course, impossible for the French Government to persist in its objection to the return of the young Queen. It therefore resolved to confine its efforts to persuading her to accept a residence as far as possible from the capital," where," wrote the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Morville, " her rank would cause too much embarrassment " ; while Tessé was charged to do everything possible to prolong her stay in Spain."

The departure of the young lady was, in fact, retarded for many weeks, notwithstanding the anxiety of Philip V. and his consort to get rid of her. There were differences between the two Courts respecting the pension which she was to receive ; concerning the composition of her Household ; about the conditions of her journey to the frontier—the Spanish Government desiring to do the thing as cheaply as possible, and, according to the expression of Tessé, " to plant her down at Bayonne, like a packet of dirty linen." And, finally, when all these matters had been adjusted, a most acrimonious and unseemly dispute arose between the Ducs de Bourbon and d'Orléans, on the question whether the latter or the French Government ought to defray the expenses of the carriages required to convey the Queen and her suite from Bayonne to Vincennes, where it had been decided that she should take up her residence.

In consequence, the early spring of 1723 found the widowed Queen still at Madrid ; and it is possible that her departure might have been delayed for some time longer, had not an event occurred which rendered her stay in Spain no longer possible.

The marriage arranged by the Regent and Dubois between Louis XV. and the Infanta had always been

regarded with the strongest disfavour by the Duc de Bourbon, for years must elapse before the "Infanta-Queen," as the little princess was called, would be able to bear an heir to the throne, and should his Majesty die without male issue, the new Duc d'Orléans, whom he cordially hated, would become King. To avert this calamity, *Monsieur le Duc* would have been quite prepared to support the claims of Philip V. to the throne, but since the death of Luis I. and Philip's resumption of the Crown of Spain, his chances in France had declined so greatly that it was now quite clear that, in the event of a vacancy, the succession of the Duc d'Orléans would be unquestioned. Urged on by his mistress, the beautiful and ambitious Madame de Prie, who at this moment practically governed France, he had therefore decided to send back the Infanta, and to marry Louis XV. with as little delay as possible to some princess capable of at once making him a father; and for weeks past French agents had been busily prosecuting all over Europe their search for the future Queen of France.

Early in 1725, a despatch from Philip V. to his Ambassador at the Court of Versailles was intercepted by the agents of *Monsieur le Duc*, which showed that it was his intention to demand "the public declaration of the nuptial arrangements" between Louis XV. and the Infanta; and almost immediately afterwards the young King fell so ill that for several days he was believed to be in serious danger.

This last event precipitated matters, and the French Government resolved not to wait until the new *fiancée* was chosen, but to inform the Court of Madrid at once of the resolution at which it had arrived. Tessé, who, suspecting

what was in the wind and being unwilling to be a party to it, had demanded his recall, was replaced by the Abbé de Livry, *chargé d'affaires* at Lisbon; and it was he who presented to the King of Spain the letter in which Louis XV. endeavoured to justify the affront which he was inflicting upon his uncle.

"Trembling from head to foot, the abbé presented to the King his master's letter. The Queen was at the end of the cabinet, occupied with her correspondence. Suddenly, she heard the King strike the table violently, and cry out: 'Ah! the traitor!' She ran to him. . . . The King handed her the letter, saying: 'Take it, Madame, read it!' The Queen read it, and then, handing back the letter, she replied with great composure: 'Well! We must send to receive the Infanta.'"

Such is the account given of this audience by the President Hénault, but, according to Coxe, Elizabeth Farnese was anything but composed. "The queen," he writes, "tearing a portrait of Louis XV. from her bracelet, trampled it under foot, and exclaimed: 'All the Bourbons are a race of devils!' But, recollecting the relationship of her husband to that House, she turned to him and added: 'Except your Majesty.'" To the English Ambassador, Stanhope, who was immediately sent for, she expressed her indignation with still greater freedom. "That one-eyed scoundrel," said she, alluding to the Duc de Bourbon, who, as we have mentioned, had lost an eye by a shooting accident,[1] "has sent back my daughter, because the King would not create his concubine's husband a grandee of Spain!"

The nation shared the resentment of its King and

[1] See p. 44, note 2, *supra*.

THE INFANTA MARIA AÑA VICTORIA

From the painting by Largillière, in the Museum of the Prado

Queen. When the news was known in Madrid, the indignation of the populace knew no bounds; excited crowds paraded the streets, and the French residents trembled for their safety. On March 19, the Abbé de Livry was handed his passports, and requested to leave Madrid within twenty-four hours and Spain within a fortnight; all the French consuls received orders to leave the country within the same period; and, finally, a decree was published for the deportation of every Frenchman in Spain who did not immediately apply for letters of naturalisation, though this was subsequently withdrawn.[1]

The rupture of the betrothal between Don Carlos and Mlle. de Beaujolais was decided upon by way of reprisals, and Philip V. even talked of imprisoning the little princess and his widowed daughter-in-law in some remote corner of the kingdom, where they should remain as hostages for the Infanta. But he soon changed his mind, and on March 23 the two sisters quitted Madrid and set out for France. The Court, with whom she had been a universal favourite, saw the departure of Mlle. de Beaujolais with regret; while Don Carlos was in despair at the loss of his betrothed.

At Lerma, the princesses were detained until after Easter, being treated very much like prisoners of State,

[1] This decree had been extorted from Philip V. by the Queen; but, on reflection, the King perceived its impracticability, and had recourse to a whimsical expedient to pacify his imperious consort—one of the few jokes with which this melancholy monarch has been credited. Summoning his *valets de chambre*, he bade them empty his wardrobes and pack his trunks, as though for a long journey. The Queen, entering amidst the bustle, inquired the cause of such preparations. "Is it not decreed," said Philip, "that all the French leave Spain? I am a Frenchman, and am therefore preparing for my journey." Elizabeth burst out laughing, and the order was recalled.—Coxe.

and then sent on to Burgos, to await news of the journey of the Infanta. That little lady left Paris on April 5, under the care of the Duchesse de Tallard. She was treated with every imaginable honour, and informed that she was merely going to pay a visit to her family. The exchange of princesses was effected on the 22nd, at the foot of the mountain of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. The Spaniards, according to Mathieu Marais, had sworn that they would accept no presents, but the sight of the magnificent gifts intended for them, which included a silver toilette-set valued at 100,000 écus, proved too much for their cupidity, and they took them all; while the ladies who had escorted the Infanta had to return empty-handed to Paris.

The princesses were unable to make their entry into Bayonne for some days, for the spiteful Duc de Bourbon had neglected to send orders for preparations to be made for their reception until they had almost reached the frontier. He had also countermanded the carriages of the Court, and the Duchesse d'Orléans was obliged to send her own for the conveyance of her daughters and their suite to Vincennes, where they arrived at the end of June.

Few widowed queens have found themselves relegated more completely to obscurity than Élisabeth d'Orléans. "Of the incoherent dream of her royalty," observes Lemontey, "nothing remained to her in France save the ennui of a dignity without power and the ridicule of a guard covered with rags."

Her life was a sad one, for she commanded neither affection nor respect from those about her; and the one

desire of her relatives, alarmed lest she should resume in France the eccentricities which had caused so much scandal in Spain, was to see as little of her as possible. For two years she lived at Vincennes, but the pension promised her by Philip V. was so irregularly paid as to cause her serious pecuniary difficulties, and in 1727 she was obliged temporarily to break up her Household and retire to the Carmelites of the Faubourg Saint-Jacques. In this pious retreat she remained for more than three years, when, the continued representations of the French Government having at length succeeded in securing the payment of the arrears due to her, she installed herself in the Luxembourg, where she lived an obscure and monotonous existence, dominated by servants who were bribed by Spain to spy upon her actions, presumably in the hope of discovering something which might furnish the parsimonious Court of Madrid with some plausible pretext for discontinuing her pension.

Her contemporaries mention her but seldom, and when they do, it is generally in reference to some squabble on a point of etiquette, such as that with her sister, the Princess of Modena, described elsewhere.[1] During the last years of her life she became exceedingly devout, passed the greater part of her time in devotional exercises, and refused to receive any one. She died of dropsy, at the Luxembourg, on June 16, 1742, and was interred in the Church of Saint-Sulpice, the simple inscription: "*Cy gît Élisabeth, reine douarière d'Espagne*" being, by her own instructions, engraved upon her tomb.

Her death was hailed with relief by her relatives on both sides of the Pyrenees; and the Duc de Luynes

[1] See p. 351, *infra*.

relates that when Campo-Florido, the Spanish Ambassador, came, with great ceremony, to make the official announcement of this event to the Royal Family, on account of the absence of Louis XV., " he was unable to refrain from smiling, and was received also with smiles by the Queen, the Dauphin and *Madame.*[1]

The sister who had accompanied her from Spain had predeceased her by more than eight years. During this time more than one matrimonial alliance appears to have been suggested to her, only to be refused, for Mlle. de Beaujolais still cherished the hope of being one day reunited to the prince from whom the exigencies of politics had separated her, but whom she was unable to forget. The Duchesse d'Orléans, from motives of ambition, entered into her daughter's views, and when, towards the end of 1730, diplomatic relations between France and Spain were resumed, and the Comte de Rothembourg was despatched as Ambassador to Madrid, she seized the opportunity to approach Fleury on the subject.

The report, however, which Rothembourg despatched to his Government of his first audience with their Catholic Majesties, in which the Queen refused to take any notice of the Ambassador until Philip entreated her to think only of their nephew and of the harmony which ought to exist between them, must have convinced Fleury that she was still far too hostile to France to entertain such a proposition. Indeed, shortly afterwards, the two nations were once more on the verge of war.

When, however, in 1732, Elizabeth Farnese, after so many years of intrigue, won her first substantial triumph,

[1] *Mémoires,* July 15, 1742.

Don Carlos, King of the Two Sicilies (afterwards Carlos III., King of Spain)

From an engraving by Roy, after the painting by Delle Piane

and Don Carlos took possession of the duchies of Parma and Piacenza, the hopes of the Duchesse d'Orléans and her daughter revived.

The Marquis de Bissy, the French resident at Parma, was instructed to sound the inclinations of that Court in regard to the project so unhappily frustrated in 1725, and circumstances seemed to augur well for its eventual realisation. He received a confidential communication from the Duke of Parma's chief physician, to the effect that the prince had not been less faithful to his first love than she to him ; that he cherished as a precious souvenir of the princess a ring which she had given him at Madrid, and might often be seen contemplating it with tears in his eyes, and that, in short, Mlle. de Beaujolais was " the occupation of his days and the torment of his nights." [1]

Encouraged by this intelligence, Bissy approached Don Carlos himself, who informed him that the marriage was the dearest wish of his heart, and was, moreover, desired by all the Spaniards who had accompanied him to Parma. And he urged the Minister to use every endeavour to conclude the matter with the least possible delay.

Unhappily, the young prince was not yet free to dispose of his hand ; and the aged Minister who directed the policy of France and in whom the "Termagant of Spain" had inspired a veritable dread, feared that the least indication of such negotiations would appear to that jealous and vindictive princess as an enterprise against her authority. He therefore professed himself unable to take any steps to further the union of these true lovers, until he could feel assured of meeting with no active opposition on the side of Spain, and recommended to Bissy

[1] Lemontey.

an extreme reserve in regard to confidences of this nature.

In the following year, the War of the Polish Succession broke out, which was to bring to Don Carlos the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Mlle. de Beaujolais did not live to see that day. At the end of April 1734, she was attacked by measles—in those days a malady very much dreaded—to which she succumbed on the 21st of the following month, to the great regret of both the Court and the public. "Everybody is in tears, and I also," writes Mathieu Marais to his friend, the President Bouhier; "she was a charming princess."

Born on December 18, 1714, Philippine Élisabeth d'Orléans had not yet completed her twentieth year.

CHAPTER XVII

Unfortunate effect of the Regent's death upon the situation of the Princess of Modena—Her discreet conduct—Arrangement with her father-in-law, who, however, continues to subject her to all kinds of petty humiliations—Death of her little son—The prince and princess make their way to Strasbourg, in the hope of being permitted to enter France; but are compelled to return to Italy—Intolerable situation—Interference of the French Government—New arrangement with the Duke, which the latter again contrives to evade—Cruel indifference of the Duchesse d'Orléans to her daughter's unhappy lot—Invasion of the duchy of Modena—The prince comes to Paris, but his wife, after reaching Lyons, is ordered to return to Italy—She at length secures authorisation to visit Paris, on condition that she preserves a strict incognito—Odious behaviour of the Palais-Royal towards her—Quarrel with the Queen of Spain—Repeated endeavours of her mother and brother to secure an order for her departure—Death of Duke Rinaldo and accession of Francesco d'Este—The Duchess of Modena remains in Paris—Her departure for Italy.

CONTRARY to what might have been anticipated, the birth of a son to the Prince and Princess of Modena was far from bringing about a reconciliation between them and Duke Rinaldo. The old gentleman, indeed, received the news with comparative indifference, and, though he offered to pay a visit of felicitation to his daughter-in-law, it was on conditions so humiliating to the latter and her husband that Francesco d'Este, believing that his future was now assured, declined the honour.

A few weeks afterwards came the death of the Regent, an event which not only dissipated all the princess's hopes of being permitted to return to France, but deprived her

of her only effectual protection against the tyranny of her father-in-law. Her despair was such that for more than a week she was absolutely prostrated, and her physicians considered it advisable to bleed her ; and for some time afterwards she continued in a state of the most profound dejection. One day, she inquired of Colibeaux if he were continuing his reports to France, and, on his answering in the affirmative, burst into tears and exclaimed : " Cease writing ; my father is no more ; and I now count for nothing."

Her situation, indeed, had changed altogether for the worse. The Duc de Bourbon, who had become Prime Minister on the death of the Regent, was, as we know, the implacable enemy of the House of Orléans, and his accession to power meant the loss of her family's political importance and her own abandonment. This, indeed, was soon apparent. Aware that there was now little prospect of the French Government intervening on behalf of his daughter-in-law, the Duke of Modena became more and more exacting ; while the prince actually proposed to his wife to enter a convent, in order to leave him at liberty to retire to Vienna, where a brilliant position in the Imperial service had been offered him.

In the face of these adverse circumstances, it must be admitted that Charlotte d'Orléans conducted herself with commendable discretion. Knowing that there was now nothing to hope for on the side of France, she resolved to endeavour to conciliate her father-in-law, and secure for herself an establishment in Italy commensurate with her rank, and where she might be enabled to live in comfort and tranquillity. Thanks to the intervention of the Cardinal de Rohan, a kind of treaty was finally signed

with the Duke, whereby the latter agreed to purchase for the princess a country-house near Reggio, where she was to reside in future, with permission to pay five visits a year to Modena: at Easter, at Christmas, and on the birthdays of the Duke, her husband and herself. The expense of these visits was to be borne by the Duke, and she also secured "the privilege of writing to him without previous permission," which had been at first refused (April 1724).

Unfortunately, although the attitude of the princess towards her father-in-law was quite irreproachable, the Duke continued to subject her to all kinds of petty humiliations; and in July the princess, in despair, appealed to the French Government, through the Cardinal de Rohan, for permission to visit France.

The request was not officially refused, but conditions were attached to her visit which made its realisation altogether impossible, such as the permission of the Duke of Modena, and an undertaking from him to defray all the expenses of the journey and of her stay in France; and the only result of her appeal was to exasperate the Duke, who proceeded to deprive her of her horses and carriages, evidently with the intention of preventing her from visiting Modena, and to reduce her pension by more than one half.

In these proceedings he was abetted by his eldest son, who appears to have been hopeful that this continuous persecution would drive the princess into committing some act of folly, which would justify them in relegating her to a convent. His expectation was not gratified, for Charlotte d'Orléans testified under these trying conditions a really admirable resignation; while Colibeaux addressed the most touching appeals on her behalf to

Versailles, declaring that "it was a spectacle worthy of compassion to see a princess brought up at the Palais-Royal, and who had the honour of being aunt of the greatest King in the world, reduced to a Court in which everything was lacking."

At length, the Duc de Bourbon decided that the humiliating situation of the princess was calculated to injure the prestige of France in the eyes of Europe, and at the beginning of October he addressed a remonstrance to the Duke of Modena. His intervention, however, does not appear to have produced much effect.

At the beginning of the following summer, the princess's little son died. This sad event put an end to the comparative harmony which existed between Francesco d'Este and his father, who once more began intriguing to get Prince Frederico declared heir to the throne; and, at the same time, brought about a reconciliation between the prince and princess. By September, the old Duke had contrived to render their situation so intolerable that they quitted Reggio, and, having assumed the names of the Comte and Comtesse de Saint-Félix, made their way to Strasbourg, in the hope of being allowed to enter France. But, though their friend the Cardinal de Rohan warmly espoused their cause with the French Government, the Duc de Bourbon refused them permission to cross the frontier, unless they obtained the consent of the Duke of Modena and the Duchesse d'Orléans; and, after spending some weeks at the little Court of Lunéville, the truant couple returned to Reggio.

On October 6, 1726, the princess, who, at the beginning of the previous year, had given birth to a daughter, presented her husband with a son, Ercole Rinaldo, who

was one day to succeed to the ducal throne of Modena. This increase in their family, however, was not followed by any augmentation of their income; indeed, the Duke, notwithstanding the stipulations of the contract, had the meanness to pay his daughter-in-law's pension, which, besides, was greatly in arrears, in Italian liri, much inferior in value at this period to the French livre. The consequence was that the unfortunate pair found themselves reduced to the most cruel straits and, in the autumn of 1728, leaving their children at Reggio, they fled to Genoa and threw themselves on the protection of Campredon, the French resident.

The Court of Versailles, fearful lest, after all, it should be obliged to accord an asylum to the princess, this time intervened with firmness, and Fleury, who had replaced the Duc de Bourbon at the head of affairs, directed Campredon to proceed to Modena and bring the Duke to reason. Campredon obeyed, but the only reply that he could at first obtain from the old tyrant was an assurance that his son and daughter-in-law might return to Reggio, "provided they did not trouble his repose." When, however, the envoy assumed a firmer tone and threatened him with the displeasure of the French Government, he offered to agree to the financial concessions demanded of him, on certain conditions, which included the dismissal of two of the prince's and one of the princess's favourite attendants, on the ground that they had incited their master and mistress against him; the immediate return of the fugitives to Reggio and their engagement "to no longer trouble his repose," which meant that they were not to present themselves at Modena, except at his express invitation; and the

surrender of their little son, with whose education he proposed to charge himself.

The princess at first flatly refused to accept these conditions, but eventually a sort of compromise was arrived at, and at the beginning of September 1729 she and her husband returned to Reggio. But the old Duke as usual proceeded to evade his engagements, and the situation of the unfortunate couple remained as intolerable as ever.

We may here observe that, whatever faults the princess may have committed before her marriage, no breath of scandal had tarnished her reputation since, and she had certainly done nothing to deserve the humiliating treatment to which she was subjected. Nor can one blame too severely the profound indifference shown by the Duchesse d'Orléans to her daughter's unhappy lot. If the ordinary sentiments of a mother were not to be expected from the duchess, one would at least have thought that she would have been concerned to defend the honour of a person so nearly related to her. But her only anxiety seems to have been to prevent the unfortunate princess finding an asylum in France; and when, at the beginning of 1730, the latter addressed to her mother a reproachful, though perfectly respectful, letter, pointing out how persistently she had denied her the sympathy to which she was entitled, and how entirely she had misjudged her motives in seeking authorisation to come to France, it remained unanswered.

Towards the end of 1733, events afforded Charlotte d'Orléans the opportunity of realising the dream she had so long cherished. The War of the Polish Succession broke out, and the Duke of Modena, notwithstanding

that he had hastened to declare himself neutral, saw his dominions occupied by foreign armies. He retired to Bologna, to await more tranquil times; while his eldest son set out for Paris. The princess followed him, but she did not dare to venture farther than Lyons, and it was agreed between her and her husband that she should remain there until he had succeeded in procuring from the Government permission for her to join him. But Francesco d'Este allowed himself to be talked over by the Duchesse d'Orléans and her son, who wished at all costs to keep the princess at a distance, and, instead of furthering his wife's wishes, he wrote advising her to remain where she was.

The princess, after writing a very sharp letter to her husband, appealed to Fleury, and received in reply a formal order to return to Italy and take up her residence with Campredon at the French Legation at Genoa, which she did not dare to disobey. However, towards the end of the following summer, a rumour spread that Duke Rinaldo and his eldest son, notwithstanding their professed neutrality, were making common cause with the Imperialists; and the Duke, much alarmed by this report, as matters were now going very badly with Austria, begged his daughter-in-law to go and plead his cause at the Court of France. The princess eagerly consented, and embarking at Leghorn on the galley of her half-brother, the Chevalier d'Orléans, landed in the last days of September at Marseilles.

Her fond relatives at the Palais-Royal were terribly alarmed on learning of her approach, and entreated the Government to stop her, with the result that, when she arrived at Aix, she was met by one Boisgnorel, an exempt

of the Gardes du Corps, bearing an order from the King couched in the following terms :

" My aunt, having learned that you have arrived at Marseilles without my permission, and not judging it opportune, for important considerations, that you should approach nearer Paris than the town of Lyons, I write you this letter to tell you that you are not to go farther until I inform you more particularly of my will." [1]

At Lyons, the princess remained for more than four months, when, thanks to the efforts of the Prince of Modena,[2] and on the understanding that she should not remain in Paris without her husband, that she should maintain a strict incognito, and should take her departure at the first request to do so, her mother and brother withdrew their opposition, and the royal interdict was raised.

On receiving this joyful news, Charlotte d'Orléans lost no time in leaving Lyons, and on March 12 she arrived in Paris, after an absence of nearly fifteen years. But, though she had reached the end of her desires, she was not at the end of her trials and humiliations. With the exception of her kind-hearted cousin, Mlle. de la Roche-sur-Yon, who met her at the last stage before reaching Paris, no one troubled to come and welcome her, and

[1] Archives des Affaires Étrangères, published by Barthélemy.

[2] If we are to believe the *Mélanges* of Boisjourdain, Francesco d'Este only succeeded in overcoming the opposition of the Duc d'Orléans by resorting to a ruse. Aware that the duke, after a somewhat irregular youth, had become a *dévot* of the most rigorous type, he intimated to him that he could not answer for his fidelity to the princess if they were any longer kept apart, and pretended to make advances to a certain Mlle. Carlon, of the Opera, who, being a party to the deception, received them with much apparent favour. Whereupon the Duc d'Orléans " consented to the visit of his sister, in order to save his brother-in-law from sin."

when she alighted at the Palais-Royal, the reception she received from her mother and brother was of the most frigid description. "They embraced her coldly, talked about indifferent matters, yawned, and at the end of half-an-hour of ennui they separated, without there having been any question of offering her either accommodation or refreshment.[1]

As her relatives had declined to offer her the hospitality of the Palais-Royal, the princess went to live with her husband at the Hôtel de Luynes, in the Rue du Colombier, not far from the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, from which, however, they shortly afterwards removed to the Hôtel de Lyon, in the Rue des Petits-Champs, which was, of course, much nearer the Palais-Royal.

The Duc d'Orléans is said to have sent his sister 25,000 écus to defray the cost of her stay in Paris, but in other respects both he and his mother behaved in the most odious way towards her, and seemed resolved to spare her no mortification. They endeavoured to prevent her from being received by the Queen, on the ground that it would afford her the means of raising the incognito which she had promised to maintain; they persuaded the King to write to her, forbidding her absolutely to discuss the political situation in Italy with the Ministers, and begged Fleury to speak to her in such a manner "as to leave her no hope of charging herself with any negotiations"; and, some days after her arrival, the duke instructed the curé of Saint-Paul, his confessor and almoner, to inform the poor people among whom he was accustomed to distribute the prince's alms that, so long as the Princess of Modena remained in Paris at the expense of his Royal Highness,

[1] Boisjourdain, *Mélanges.*

they must expect nothing more from him. This mean action naturally served to excite the populace against the unfortunate lady; and the fact that she was not lodged at the Palais-Royal and was compelled to go about in a modest equipage hired from a livery-stable, since her brother had refused to lend her any of his own carriages, created a most unfortunate impression. Her servants were insulted in the streets, and one evening, when leaving the Opera, she herself was subjected to the most gross indignity, the rabble bawling out to her coachman to drive her back to Modena, where she might accord her father-in-law the favours which she had once granted to her father in Paris.[1]

At the end of May 1735, Francesco d'Este announced that urgent affairs recalled him to Italy; but, since he proposed to visit Holland and England first, he expressed the hope that his wife would be permitted to remain in France until he could return for her. The Duc d'Orléans immediately wrote to Fleury, begging him to compel his sister to leave Paris and retire to some town near the frontier, "until it might please the prince to come and fetch her." But Charlotte d'Orléans had not wasted her time since her arrival in Paris. She was still a very attractive woman, "even after fifteen years of marriage";[2] she knew how to make the most of her charms, and, moreover, the discretion with which she had conducted herself had impressed the Ministers very favourably. Accordingly, notwithstanding the resistance of the Palais-Royal, Louis XV. gave her permission to remain in Paris, on condition, however, that she should retire to the Val-de-Grâce and not leave it without express permis-

[1] Boisjourdain. [2] *Ibid.*

sion. At the request of her husband, this restriction on her liberty was subsequently withdrawn, though she was forbidden to visit the theatres or to approach the Court.

Francesco d'Este returned at the beginning of 1736; but he was in no hurry to leave Paris, and he and his wife settled down again at the Hôtel de Lyon, to the intense disgust of the Orléans family. In the spring, a violent quarrel took place between the princess and her sister, the Queen of Spain, over a question of ceremonial. On Palm Sunday, both happened to visit the Jesuit Church in the Rue Saint-Antoine, to hear a sermon by Père Neuville, a preacher of great celebrity. The Fathers sent a carpet to the princess's tribune, but her loving sister pretended that she had no right to one in her presence, and despatched an officer of her guards to order her to remove it. This she refused to do, alleging that she owed this respect only to the Queen of France. The widow of Luis I. was furious, and the Duc d'Orléans warmly espoused her cause, and wrote to Fleury suggesting that this was "a fine opportunity to order the Princess of Modena to retire, if not to Italy, at least into some provincial town." He added that his mother was of the same opinion.

Fortunately for the princess, she had the prudence to obey the orders of Louis XV. to apologize to her sister, or, at any rate, she sent Francesco d'Este to make her excuses; and the matter was allowed to drop. The quarrel was revived a few weeks later, when her coachman, either by her orders or on his own initiative, declined to stop his carriage to permit that of the Queen of Spain to pass. The Duc d'Orléans, unwilling to allow any opportunity of humiliating his elder sister to escape him, demanded that

the King should order her to go in person to apologize to the outraged Queen; but, on the princess representing that the affront was an accident, she was permitted to send a letter of regret instead.

On September 30 of that year, Charlotte d'Orléans gave birth to a daughter. The approach of this interesting event had naturally furnished her with an excellent pretext for postponing her departure; but no sooner was her health re-established than the Duc d'Orléans renewed his efforts to secure an order for her to leave Paris. Fleury, however, who sympathised with the princess, and secretly sustained her against the malice of her family, acceded to her request to be permitted to remain until the return of her husband from Hungary, whither he was about to proceed to take command of the artillery of the Imperialist army operating against the Turks.

On October 26, 1737, Duke Rinaldo, whom the conclusion of peace between the belligerent Powers in the previous spring had enabled to return to his capital, died, and Francesco d'Este became Duke of Modena. The fact that her husband was now a sovereign prince did not, however, cause Charlotte d'Orléans to be treated with any more consideration by the Court of France; and, thanks to the opposition of her brother, with whom she was now engaged in an acrimonious lawsuit over some disputed family property, the gates of Versailles still remained closed to her. However, she appears to have preferred the affronts to which she had to submit in Paris to the pleasures of domination at Modena, and it was not until the end of June 1739 that she set out for Italy. For some time past she had not been on speaking terms with her relatives at the Palais-Royal, and though Fleury

begged her, for form's sake, to pay them a farewell visit, she refused. "I have the honour to tell your Eminence," she writes, "that if, after the unworthy manner in which the Duke of Modena has seen me treated by my family, he were to perceive that, at the last moment, I had all the imaginable baseness to visit them again, it would teach him that I required to be guided by blows from a cudgel." [1]

[1] Lemontey.

CHAPTER XVIII

The death of the Regent deprives the Abbess of Chelles of her influence in ecclesiastical matters—She continues, however, her efforts on behalf of the Jansenists—She issues a manifesto, which is suppressed by a decree of the Council—Her adventure with the Cardinal de Bissy—She is forbidden to leave her convent—She resigns her abbey, and retires to the priory of the Benedictines of la Madeleine du Trainel—Piety of her last years—Her *Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament*—Her death.

THE death of the Regent was a terrible blow to the Abbess of Chelles. Not only did she lose a kind and indulgent father, to whom she was warmly attached, but she saw disappear, at the same moment, the influence which she had derived from her near relationship to the head of the State. "The authority which his affection for me had given me," she wrote, "was annihilated with him. His Ministers, formerly so submissive to his orders, so assiduous in paying their court to me, resumed their natural pride. My family itself abandoned me on a slight pretext. I arrived at the Val-de-Grâce; what a difference for a soul as vain as mine! My rooms, which, in my father's lifetime, were always full of people, were empty. The thousands of petitions and memoirs which it used to please my vanity to receive had changed into the ordinary demands of the poor. I returned to my abbey, rage in my heart, and very determined to console myself by every means that I could find. This unhappy incident has been the cause of all the faults that I have com-

mitted from the age of twenty-five up to that of thirty-three."[1]

Nevertheless, she continued her efforts on behalf of the Jansenists, more persecuted than ever after Fleury had replaced the Duc de Bourbon as First Minister, and sheltered many of them at the Val-de-Grâce, as she had previously done at Chelles. The Jesuits summoned to their aid the Duchesse d'Orléans, an ardent Molinist, and persuaded her to represent to her daughter the iniquity of her conduct; but the abbess bitterly resented the interference of her mother, and the only result was another violent quarrel between the two princesses. The Jesuits thereupon caused a rumour to be propagated that Mlle. d'Orléans had repented of her errors and returned to the true fold, and "all Paris was persuaded of it."[2] The abbess replied by a species of manifesto, under the title of *Lettre de S.A.R. Mme. d'Orléans, abbesse de Chelles, à une de ses amies*, "full of errors which the Church has long condemned, and expressions contrary to the spirit of submission which the monastic state which she has embraced obliges her to observe."[3] The Council issued a decree directing that all copies of this manifesto should be collected and destroyed by the police, but, at the same time, in order to spare the feelings of the House of Orléans, declared its opinion that the condemned letter was not the work of the princess, on the ground that she was therein styled "Royal Highness," whereas her proper appellation was "Most Serene Highness."

Soon after this, Mlle. d'Orléans had an adventure with

[1] MSS. of Mlle. d'Orléans, formerly in the library of M. Leber, published by Barthélemy.

[2] Soulavie, *Mémoires du duc de Richelieu.*

[3] Marais.

the Cardinal de Bissy, Bishop of Meaux, one of the most bitter persecutors of the Jansenists, which occasioned a great deal of talk. Soulavie gives the following account of this affair :

" Madame de Rohan, Abbess of Hyères,[1] used to visit Madame de Chelles, who, in her turn, went to visit her. One day, the Cardinal de Bissy, chief of the Molinist party, came to see Madame de Rohan, and asked her what was the conduct of her community in relation to the Bull [Unigenitus]. The latter replied that she had only one convert Sister who was unwilling to obey the Bull. Bissy asked that she should be sent for, and Madame de Rohan sent for Madame d'Orléans, who was not recognised, as she had assumed the dress of a convert.

" Bissy spoke of submission, and the Abbess of Chelles spoke to him of appeal and reappeal. The cardinal, becoming angry, threatened to make her do penance ; and the Sister, in a very assured tone, related to him the history of his life, and told him that he was only playing his present rôle through ambition. Fury seized the astonished cardinal, who told the convert Sister that she was unaware that he was a prince of the Church ; but the Sister, who possessed the gift of eloquence, said so much that she disconcerted him. Madame de Rohan, who was listening to this conversation, began to laugh, and Bissy, observing more closely the countenance of the convert Sister, recognised Madame d'Orléans. Thereupon he rose from his chair, and offered her the most humble apologies ; but the princess turned her back upon him, and said : ' Profit by this lesson ! ' The cardinal, deeply

[1] This is an error. Madame de Rohan was at this time Abbess of Jouarre.

mortified, had no longer any wish to dine with Madame de Rohan who had invited him, together with Madame de Chelles ; and left the convent murmuring."[1]

Mathieu Marais gives a less piquant version, which, however, is probably the more correct.

" The princess is badly advised. She is a friend of the Abbess of Jouarre, whom she visited at Jouarre, after which they came together to Paris, to a convent in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. The Cardinal de Bissy, Bishop of Meaux, went to visit Madame de Jouarre, who belongs to his diocese. The princess concealed herself, in order to listen to their conversation, in which the cardinal reproached the abbess with her intimacy with Madame de Chelles, who was a mad-brain. Upon that she emerged from her hiding-place, and had a wrangle with the cardinal, who took back his words and fled."

And Marais adds: " Subsequently, the princess received an order from a high quarter to return to her abbey and not to leave it."

After this disgrace, we hear very little of Mlle. d'Orléans. In October 1734 she resigned her abbey in favour of Anne de Clermont-Gessen, one of its former nuns, who had been for some years superior of the monastery of Beaurepaire, near Vienne, and retired to the priory of the Benedictines of la Madeleine du Trainel, transferred since 1644 to the Rue de Charonne in Paris. The prioress, Lucie d'Artagnan, a niece of the Maréchal de Montesquiou, had been one of her particular friends at the Val-de-Grâce, and owed her promotion to the good offices of the princess.

Here, in a spacious apartment which the prioress had

[1] *Mémoires du duc de Richelieu.*

prepared for her, Adélaïde d'Orléans passed the remainder of her life, which was consecrated to prayer, study, and works of charity. Her conversion was sincere and complete, and is attested by both the sceptical Duclos and the severe Saint-Simon. "Madame de Chelles," says the latter, "gradually returned to devotion and regularity, and, although *en princesse*, lived a life which grew more and more edifying, up to the time of her death, which did not occur until several years later, in the same convent, without her having quitted it."

It was here that Louis Racine addressed to her these touching verses beginning:

> "Plaisirs, beauté, jeunesse, honneur, gloire, puissance,
> Ambitieux espoir que permet la naissance,
> Tout au pied de l'Agneau fut par elle immolé."

And it was here that, in all probability, she composed her *Examen de conscience de l'abbesse de Chelles*, which, in the opinion of Lescure,[1] is less a self-examination, with her life and her recollections as its theme, than a continuation of a very remarkable manuscript entitled: *Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament, à l'usage de Madame Louise-Adélaïde d'Orléans, abbesse de Chelles*, which was found at the time of the Revolution in the possession of a family in the environs of Chelles, and passed about the middle of the last century into that of Léon Techener, who communicated its contents to the Baron Ernouf, Edward Barthélemy, Lescure, and other bibliophiles. The first-named published a very interesting notice upon it in the *Bulletin du Bibliophile* for the year 1859; Barthélemy cites a number of passages in his work on the daughters of the Regent, and Lescure has made

[1] *Les Confessions de l'abbesse de Chelles.*

extensive use of it in writing his pseudo-autobiography, *les Confessions de l'abbesse de Chelles*, mentioned elsewhere. All three are of opinion that it is not only a wonderful revelation of the workings of a human soul, but a document of quite extraordinary literary merit, and that the beauty of some of the *réflexions* will bear comparison with anything of the kind to be found in modern literature.

The Abbess of Chelles—for she preserved that title up to the last—died of smallpox on February 19, 1743, in her forty-fifth year.

CHAPTER XIX

Louise Diane d'Orléans, Mlle. de Chartres, youngest daughter of the Regent—Her birth—Her marriage with the Prince de Conti—Dispute between the unmarried Princesses of the Blood, on the question of bearing the train of her mantle—A delicate conversation—Birth of a son—Death of the princess—"Joyous life" of the Duchess of Modena, which, however, is soon interrupted by the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession—The Duchess secures authorisation to return to France, where she is now treated with all the honours due to her rank—Her enviable situation at Versailles—She marries her eldest daughter to the Duc de Penthièvre—She occupies herself with her husband's interests—Francesco d'Este, disgusted with his treatment by France, throws himself into the arms of Austria—The Duchess falls into disgrace at Versailles—She returns to Italy—Her death.

IF we may say of princesses, as of nations, that those are the happiest who have no history, then Louise Diane d'Orléans, the youngest of the Regent's daughters, ought to have been the happiest of all, for few facts of any interest concerning her are to be found in the memoirs and correspondence of her contemporaries. It is true that she was cut off in the flower of her youth—when she was scarcely twenty years old—but before reaching that age each of her sisters had, as we have seen, contrived to make in one way or another a considerable stir in the world.

This princess, who took the name of Mlle. de Chartres, which had been borne by two of her elder sisters, the Duchesse de Berry and the Abbess of Chelles, made her appearance upon the scene on July 7, 1716. Her arrival does not appear to have been particularly welcome, for the House of Orléans had already a plethora of daughters.

"At the moment when I concluded my letter to the Princess of Wales," writes *Madame*, "they came to announce to me that Madame d'Orléans was in labour. It was just eleven o'clock when my carriage was ready, and at a quarter to one I entered the ante-chamber, and was told in a low voice: 'Her Royal Highness was safely brought to bed an hour ago.' But this was said in so sad a tone that I did not doubt that Madame d'Orléans had brought into the world a seventh daughter, and that unfortunately is what has happened."

Mlle. de Chartres, if we are to believe her grandmother, does not appear to have been very attractive in her infancy. "She is not ugly," writes *Madame*, "but she is peevish and sulky; as soon as one looks at her she begins to cry." However, if she was an unattractive child, she grew into a very pretty and amiable girl, and it is sad to reflect that the only two of the Regent's daughters who were afforded, so to speak, a fair start in life, should both have died at so early an age.

On January 22, 1732, the young princess was married to Louis François de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, who was a few months younger than herself. The marriage was the occasion of an acrimonious dispute between the unmarried Princesses of the Blood, on the question of which of them was to support the train of the bride's mantle, a duty which, though supposed to be an honour, was apparently regarded by them as a menial service. It was only ended by the Dowager-Princesse de Conti announcing herself ready to carry the train of her daughter-in-law's mantle herself, if none of these haughty damsels were willing to do so. Upon which Mlle. de Sens reluctantly consented to demean herself.

After the ceremony, we are told, the dowager suggested to the Duchesse d'Orléans that, having regard to the youth of the happy pair, it would be inadvisable to permit them to pass more than a part of the wedding-night together. To which the Duchess replied that " from the day of the marriage, she had promised not to interfere in anything which concerned Mlle. de Chartres ; and that it was her mother-in-law's affair entirely."

On September 1, 1734, the Princesse de Conti gave birth to a son, who in 1755 married his cousin, Marie Fortunée d'Este, third daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Modena. Two years after the birth of her little boy, the young princess died at the magnificent château of the Contis at Issy. Mlle. de Clermont, one of the sisters of the Duc de Bourbon, was nominated by the Queen to go to Issy as her representative, and sprinkle holy water upon the body of the deceased ; and the Duc de Luynes considers it necessary to devote nearly four pages of his journal to an account of this visit, and to a breach of etiquette of which Mlle. de Clermont was guilty, and which appears to have greatly disturbed the worthy nobleman.

The Prince de Conti did not marry again ; in fact, he entered the Order of Malta, and became in 1745 Grand Prior of France. He did not, however, abjure feminine society, and his gallantries were for many years the talk of Paris. Happily, he distinguished himself also in another direction, and was one of the ablest soldiers whom France produced in the eighteenth century. He served with distinction in the War of the Polish Succession, and, when scarcely more than a boy, had risen, by sheer merit, to the rank of lieutenant-general ; and in that of the Austrian Succession he commanded French

Louise Diane d'Orléans (Mlle. de Chartres),
Princesse de Conti

From the painting by Pierre Gobert, at Versailles

(Photo by W. A. Mansell & Co.)

armies with conspicuous success in Italy and Germany. But in the Seven Years' War, when France stood so sorely in need of an able general, the hatred of Madame de Pompadour prevented him from being employed in any military capacity; and he was condemned to remain idle at the Court, while the Soubises and Clermonts were leading the troops which should have been entrusted to him to defeat and humiliation.

The Prince de Conti died in 1776, in his sixtieth year.

The Duchess of Modena outlived all her sisters. For a year or two after her return to Italy she appears to have led a very agreeable existence, and to have transformed completely the little Court of Modena, which, from being one of the dullest and most parsimonious, became one of the gayest and most extravagant in Europe. The Président de Brosses, who visited Modena during the carnival of 1740, found the duchess "living the most joyous life possible." She plays biribi all night, sups at six o'clock in the morning, goes to bed at eight, and gets up at five o'clock in the afternoon." She had established an excellent French opera in the town, with a remarkably fine *corps de ballet*, of which she was extremely proud; while the Duke had made extensive improvements at the palace, including a hall which was an exact copy of that of the Tuileries. He was also an enthusiastic collector of pictures, and his gallery promised to become one of the finest in Italy. The ducal pair gave the most splendid fêtes, and practised the most prodigal hospitality. On Shrove Tuesday 1740, after the opera was over, they entertained the company, the musicians of the orchestra, and the whole audience, to a supper in the theatre, and

the Court to another at the Ridotti. Then the Court returned to the Opera-house, which, in the meantime, had been converted into a ballroom, while at either end of the *salle* apartments had been prepared for faro and lansquenet; and dancing and gambling went on until far into the next day.

The president describes the duchess as "still a rather pretty woman; very stout, with a rather high colour, and a majestic air," and adds that "she is getting more and more to resemble the late Regent, her father."

But this life of pleasure did not last long. The death in 1741 of the Emperor Charles VI. was followed by the War of the Austrian Succession. Francesco d'Este desired to remain neutral; but Charles Emmanuel of Sardinia advanced to the Modenese frontier, called upon him to decide on which side he would declare himself, and, while he still hesitated, invaded his dominions. The duke and duchess, leaving their children at Sassuolo, where Charles Emmanuel had consented to respect their liberty, retired to Venice; and Francesco, having decided to embrace the cause of the Allies, solicited and obtained from Philip V. the command of the Spanish troops in Italy. His wife then demanded permission to come to Paris, and though, owing to the opposition of the Orléans family, this request was at first refused, her old lover Richelieu interested himself on her behalf and persuaded his friend, the Duchesse de Châteauroux, Louis XV.'s *maîtresse en titre*, to plead her cause with the King. The favourite's intervention proved successful, and the Duchess of Modena not only received the permission solicited, but was accorded, on her arrival, all the honours due to her rank.

The princess did not fail to pay assiduous court to Madame de Châteauroux, and the friendship of that lady assured her quite an enviable position at Versailles. The death of the mistress at the end of 1744 affected it but little, since Charlotte d'Orléans had succeeded in marrying her eldest daughter to the young Duc de Penthièvre, son of the Comte de Toulouse, and had, moreover, conducted herself with admirable discretion, making useful friends whenever the opportunity presented itself and giving offence to no one. She occupied herself, too, unceasingly with her husband's interests, and it was certainly not due to any lack of effort on her part that at the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle the Duke had to be content with the restoration of his States, without receiving any indemnity for the losses he had sustained.

When peace again reigned in Italy, the Duchess did not return thither, infinitely preferring the gaiety and splendour of Versailles, where she had been allotted a suite of apartments in the château, to residence at a little Court now so impoverished by the war as to be unable to offer her any of her former diversions. Had she done so, she might possibly have kept her husband faithful to France. As it was, the Duke, deeply chagrined at seeing his faithful services so poorly recompensed, decided to accept the very flattering offers he received from Vienna; and in 1753 married his daughter Béatrix to the Archduke Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and was nominated acting governor-general of Lombardy until the majority of his son-in-law, upon whom this dignity had devolved.

Meanwhile, Francesco d'Este, impatient at the long absence of his consort, had summoned her repeatedly to

return to him, but, on various pretexts, she declined to obey. Gradually, however, it became apparent that she had outworn her welcome at the French Court ; Louis XV. had never cared for her, and in the summer of 1754 she had the misfortune to offend the Queen on a point of etiquette, for which Marie Leczinska was a great stickler. From that time she appears to have fallen into a kind of disgrace, and for nearly three years the Duc de Luynes, the Dangeau of those times, does not once mention her name.

In November 1755, the duchess married her third daughter to the Comte de la Marche, afterwards Prince de Conti. In the spring of the previous year she had lost her eldest daughter, the Duchesse de Penthièvre, who had died in childbed.

Finally, in 1759, she decided to return to the domestic hearth, where she found that her husband, having apparently abandoned all hope of seeing her again, had found consolation in the society of the Marchesa Simonetti, a widow of sixty. The duchess, feeling doubtless that she was responsible for this romance, was reluctant to interrupt it ; and remained as little as possible in Modena, preferring to travel about in search of distraction. It was, however, during one of her brief sojourns at her husband's Court that she was seized with a sudden illness, which terminated fatally on January 19, 1761. Towards the end of her life she is said to have become very devout.

Francesco d'Este, who, in the following year, contracted a morganatic marriage with the Marchesa Simonetti, survived his consort nearly twenty years. He died at Varese on February 23, 1780.

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